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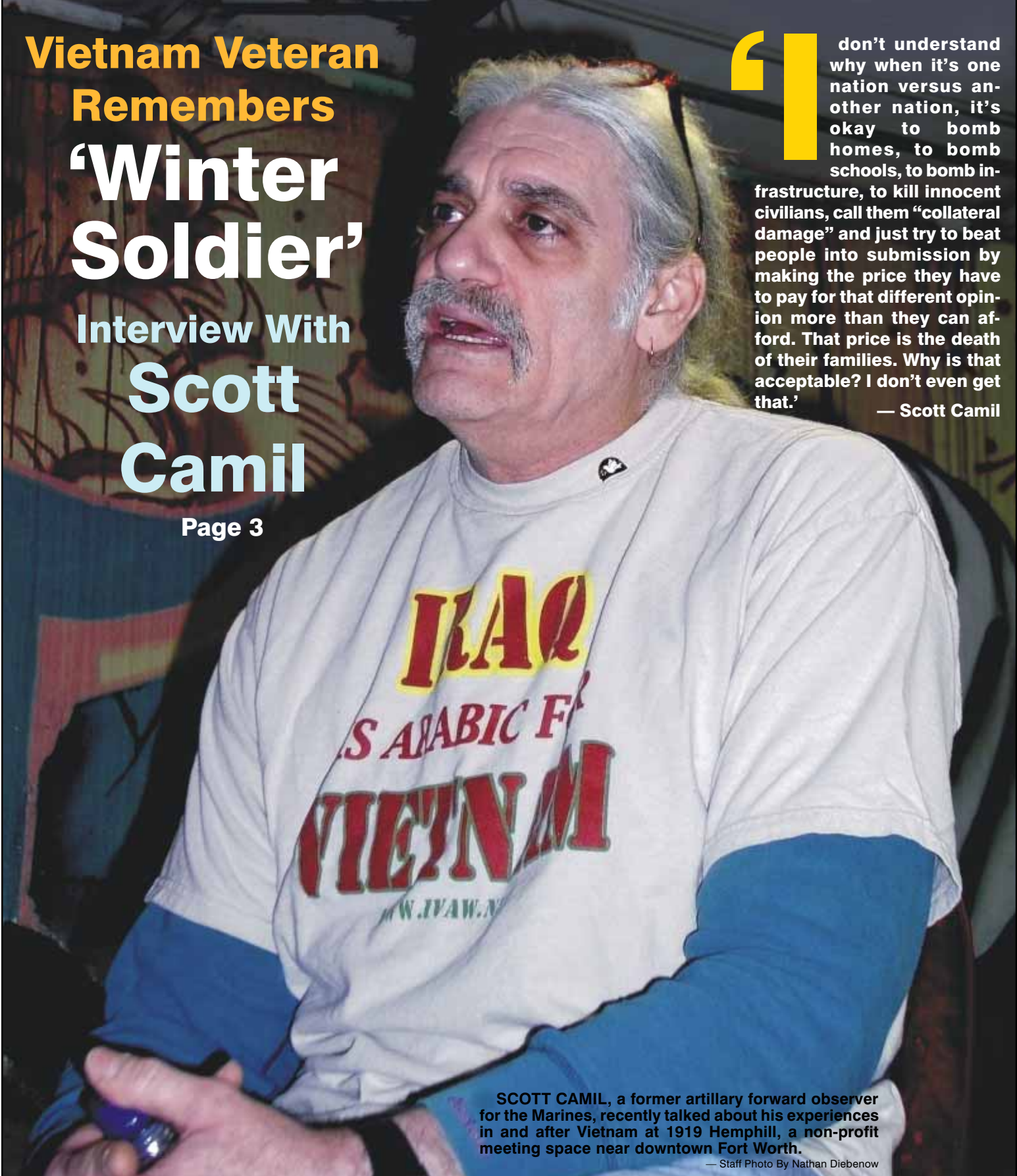
Casualties:
U.S. Military Deaths
2,215
U.S. Govt. Statistics

The Lone Star ICONOCLAST

DOGGED BY WAR

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I don't understand why when it's one nation versus another nation, it's okay to bomb homes, to bomb schools, to bomb infrastructure, to kill innocent civilians, call them "collateral damage" and just try to beat people into submission by making the price they have to pay for that different opinion more than they can afford. That price is the death of their families. Why is that acceptable? I don't even get that.'

— Scott Camil

SCOTT CAMIL, a former artillery forward observer for the Marines, recently talked about his experiences in and after Vietnam at 1919 Hemphill, a non-profit meeting space near downtown Fort Worth.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

Bush's Pledge To Cut Oil Imports Wrong, Says Advisors

WASHINGTON — In his sixth State of the Union speech delivered Tuesday night, President Bush didn't mean to set a goal to replace oil imports from the Middle East with renewable energy sources, according to White House advisors.

When President Bush made headlines by asserting that "America is addicted to oil" and that he was calling to "break this addiction," Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman said that in reality, "[t]his was purely an example."

Apparently, instead of replacing "more than 75 percent of our oil imports from

the Middle East by 2025," the president really meant that alternative fuels could

replace oil imports equal to some of the expected American oil imports from the

Middle East in 2025, the advisors said.

Because oil is a publicly-traded commodity and difficult to trace to a single region, the U.S. would inevitably import oil from the Middle East in the future, said the advisors.

A White House official told Knight Ridder newspapers on a condition of anonymity that Bush spoke about "the Middle East" in order to explain himself so that "every American sitting out there listening to the speech understands."

The U.S. receives about 60 percent of its oil from foreign countries. Less than 20 percent of the total U.S. daily imports of 10.062 million barrels came from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Iraq through all but one month last year.

However, the Bush administration estimates that the total daily U.S. oil demand could be cut in half through new technology alternatives.

Still, some energy experts are extremely skeptical that Bush and this current Congress would allow a radical shift in energy sources.

"[A]sking George Bush to tackle energy independence is like asking Jack Abramoff to tackle corruption," said Steve Kretzmann, Executive Director of Oil Change International, to Democracy Now. "This is a man who has actually received more campaign contributions from the oil and gas industry over his career than has any other politician operating in the United States today, and it's worth noting that number three on that list is Tom DeLay."

Texas-based Exxon Mobil posted the world's biggest ever profit last year with about \$32 billion, shattering its previous world-record margin of \$25 billion. Briton's Shell racked up about \$23 billion this last year, up from a profit of \$17.6 billion the year before.

Kretzmann said his group is calling for "a separation of oil and state" through the electoral process.

"We need politicians to stop being in the pockets of the oil industry. We need to stop seeing big corporate giveaways to the industry," he said. "I mean, here we have the most profitable industry in the United States, the most profitable corporation, ExxonMobil, and yet this fall, the Congress, at the urging of the President, just passed the new energy bill which gives away four billion more of our tax dollars to the oil and gas industry. When is this going to stop?"

Last November, Congress forced American oil firms to justify their booming third-quarter profits, but the firms escaped a threat of wind-fall taxation.



SOTU Rush Hour Demonstration Held At Valley Mills & Waco Drive

WACO — Representatives from Friends of Peace, Crawford Peace House, and Vets for Peace, along with some passers-by who stopped to participate, held a rush-hour demonstration at Valley Mills and Waco Drive just a few hours before George Bush's State of the Union address on Jan. 31.

A large banner urging motorists to "Honk for Impeachment" garnered quite a bit of supportive reaction, as well as some displays of anger, including one pickup driver who yelled at the group and ripped the banner in two. His license number was recorded before he sped off, and a police report was filed.

A State of the Union watch party took place later in the evening at Poppa Rollo's Pizza.



Following the demonstration, a State of the Union watch party was held at Poppa Rollo's Pizza in Waco.

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DOGGED BY WAR

Vietnam Veteran Remembers

'Winter Soldier'

Interview With Scott Camil

By NATHAN DIEBENOW
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

FORT WORTH — Sgt. Scott Camil isn't the type to run from a fight.

But while some fights come and go, one battle has stayed with him since he returned from serving in the Marine Corps during the Vietnam War.

After a recent showing of a documentary about the Winter Soldier Investigation, Sgt. Camil, 59, struggled to retell the story of how his best friend, Terry, and five others died when the artillery base they were guarding was attacked by Viet Cong soldiers on the night of April 17, 1966.

"The camp was destroyed," said Sgt. Camil, the former artillery forward observer. "The next morning, when the reinforcements came, I got out of my hole. There were dead people all over. I thought, 'Wow, this war stuff isn't as much fun as I thought it was going to be.'"

When Sgt. Camil saw the dead body of his friend, he came to a realization: "There's people here whose job it is to kill me, and they're allowed to do that. If I screw up, I don't get a time out or a second chance. This war stuff is real serious."

Camil said that he then vowed to make the Viet Cong pay for the attack, and from that day on, the war was about survival, not fighting communism or defending democracy.

Long after he returned from Vietnam, Camil was invited to participate in the three days of the Winter Soldier Investigation, Jan. 31-Feb. 2, 1971, at a Howard Johnson motel in Detroit. With support from Jane Fonda and Mark Lane, over 125 veterans spoke of atrocities they had witnessed and committed in Vietnam.

Also there, filmmakers using black-and-white film stock donated by a porno film company interviewed him and others for a 95-minute documentary about the investigation. Due to marketing and distribution difficulties, however, the film's first release was limited to New York City, San Francisco, and most of Europe. Years later, the film received a much wider second run by a different company during the Iraq War <www.wintersoldierfilm.com>.

Because of those three days in Detroit, Camil went on help organize chapters for the national anti-war organization called Vietnam Veterans Against The War. Camil is now serving with Veterans for Peace, Veterans Called To Conscience, the G.I. Rights Hotline, the Sierra Club, and an agent for several political candidates in Florida.

During the 2004 presidential election, Camil campaigned for fellow former-VVAW member Sen. John Kerry, and suffered vicious attacks from the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth.

THE LONE STAR ICONOCLAST'S Nathan

Diebenow spoke on the phone with Camil prior to the showing of Winter Soldier at 1919 Hemphill, a non-profit venue near downtown Fort Worth.

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ICONOCLAST: What's it like to live with the Vietnam War every day of your life?

SCOTT CAMIL: Well, I think for me it defines who I am, and the experience I had in Vietnam was so overwhelming, like I think war itself is an overwhelming experience, and I don't really see how anybody could come back from being in a war, a situation in Vietnam or anywhere else, and have that not become a very large part of who they now are.

ICONOCLAST: From what I understand, your whole experience through the Winter Soldier Investigation totally changed your outlook on war and government. How quickly was the transition for you?
CAMIL: For me, it took time. It started



SCOTT CAMIL, former member of Vietnam Veterans Against The War, struggles to retell the story of how his best friend, Terry, and five others died when the artillery base they were guarding was attacked by Viet Cong soldiers on the night of April 17, 1966.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

when I was in Vietnam, and there were things that didn't make sense to me, but I thought that people in charge, they had all been to college. They had access to information I don't have, and maybe this fuck up they're doing with us over here is a distraction, so they can do something more important somewhere else. You tend to have faith in them. So I accepted all the stuff that we did, and now when I think of it, I wonder how I could have been so naive.

I also think of the guys in Iraq right now and Afghanistan because it's just the same thing. The idea of going to battle to secure a piece of land, and then after you've secured the piece of land, you leave. And then you leave and it becomes the property of others. And you come back to secure that land again. You keep losing men securing the same piece of land. You're always surrounded, and it doesn't seem like you're accomplishing anything. That didn't make sense to me

in Vietnam, and it doesn't make sense to me now.

Then when I came home from Vietnam, seeing on newspapers and TV what the government was saying about the war wasn't really the truth, but then again, they're government. They know what's going on. Who am I to question anything? And I didn't recognize my right and more importantly my responsibility as a citizen in a democracy to do something about it if I thought something was wrong.

When I came home from Vietnam, it was really a time for me to catch up with my friends who didn't go into the service. They were married. They had families. They had jobs. I was four years behind, and I wanted to have fun, and in Vietnam, one of the things I learned was that life is fleeting. You could be alive one second and dead the next second, so when I came home with that in mind, I spent a

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• **SCOTT CAMIL: REMEMBERING 'WINTER SOLDIER'** ... Continued From Page 3

lot of time having fun because I might be dead tomorrow. I didn't really think about where I had just been. I kept thinking about enjoying life all I can.

When I went to college, we read Howard Zinn's *The People's History of the United States*, and that all of a sudden changed my perspective on stuff. It wasn't until I had gotten to *Winter Soldier* that all those little pieces of information came into a picture I could recognize and get direction from. It was really the questions asked of me by the filmmakers. Nobody had ever sat me down and asked me questions before and made me think about the things that I had done and why I had done them and made me introspective. The filmmakers did that and that really changed who I was.

When that three days of *Winter Soldier* was over I saw a clear picture that said the Vietnam War was wrong. I saw a clear picture that war is the largest of all human rights violations. When you nit-pick about whether women were raped or children were killed, that's really nit-picking because these other behaviors are a part of this really bad thing, this institution called war. So it changed what I was going to do with the rest of my life and how I viewed things. I committed myself at that time to work against the war.

ICONOCLAST: One of the things I find parallel among Howard Zinn's take on the Civil War and Jane Fonda's understanding of the Vietnam War was that the soldiers have to tell people about what they have seen, and it's only the soldiers' families and the soldiers themselves that can put an end to the war. Was that something that was going through your mind at the time of *Winter Soldier*?

CAMIL: That's 100 percent true. It was actually Jane Fonda coming to the University of Florida and speaking that got me to do the first thing that I did, which was go up to the front and talk to them about Vietnam and agree to go to *Winter Soldier*.

Basically what she said when she spoke here was in order for democracy to function, the public had to have access to the truth. They did not have access to the truth about Vietnam, and that it was the duty of patriotic American veterans who had been to Vietnam to tell the public what was being done with their money.

I think the biggest flaw in my understanding was when you come back from spending 20 months doing something, you know what that is and you just assume that everybody knows what it is, too. And I didn't realize that I had information that people didn't know and that furthermore was extremely important information that they needed to know. It wasn't until I heard Jane Fonda speak at the University of Florida that I made that connection. She made that connection for me.

ICONOCLAST: My next question has to do with tactics and stopping a system that is doing something wrong. You proposed assassinating senators who supported the Vietnam War and then you were targeted for assassination by the FBI and survived. Can you talk about what went through your mind during that time before and after the assassination attempt on you?

CAMIL: To start with, the information about me proposing to assassinate senators is a little bit not correct. I'm going to get it specific for you. My plan was to kill the hawks in Congress. That was congressmen and senators, and they were defined by the term hawk. I never issued any name of specific people and I didn't target just senators.



BOOK SIGNING — Scott Camil signs book at 1919 Hemphill in Fort Worth after a showing of *Winter Soldier*, a documentary about over 125 veterans who spoke of atrocities they had witnessed and committed in Vietnam during the three days of the *Winter Soldier Investigation*, Jan. 31-Feb. 2, 1971, at a Howard Johnson motel in Detroit.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

What I said was if we are willing to go halfway around the world and put our lives on the line to protect the Constitution, why should it matter who it is that is trying to hurt the Constitution? If we can go halfway around the world to fight Communists because they want to destroy our way of life and our Constitution, then shouldn't we be willing to risk our lives right here in our own country defending those same rights and the same Constitution?

The public is against this war. The government is not listening to the public. The highest authority in a democracy is the public. It's us. It's not the Supreme Court. It's not the Congress. It's not the President. They are public servants for me. It is my duty as a citizen of this democracy to put them in check, to make sure they are doing what they are supposed to be doing, and when they are not doing what they are supposed to be doing, it is my responsibility to do something about it because those things were being done in my name with my money.

So we the people are the ultimate authority, and when the government is out of control, we use the minimum amount of force to change that. That's where I was coming from. Let me also just mention further about that. I recognize that not only was the war in Vietnam criminal, but the government was murdering blacks in the United States. They were killing people in the American Indian movement. They killed people at Kent State. My government was criminally out of control, murdering people around the world and murdering its own citizens and it was the responsibility of those citizens in the democracy to stop it.

The final thing is after spending 20 months in Vietnam as a Marine Corps Sergeant, my experience and method of conflict resolution was as a Marine Sergeant. It was my training and my experience that led me to the conclusion that this is how to solve the problem—turning the guns around, if you will.

ICONOCLAST: I see. I see. Your 20 months in Vietnam led you to conclude violence was a solution.

CAMIL: That's what you do. In Vietnam, we're fucking around. We're not killing the head of the snake. We're fucking

around with the tail. We're never going to get this thing over. If you want to deal with the enemy, you go and cut its head off. That's where I was coming from, thinking as a Marine Sergeant how am I going to solve this problem. What is my experience in problem solving? My experience in problem solving was Vietnam.

ICONOCLAST: And when you were targeted by the FBI, what was going through your head then?

CAMIL: I didn't really know that I was targeted as such. I knew the government was capable of murdering its own citizens, and I knew they were after me. I'm a — I don't know what word to use — strange or different. The person I am — when I go out to cut my yard, I'll spend a couple of hours cutting the yard and it'll be done and then I'll stand back and look at it. It'll look great. It'll make me feel good inside. It gives me positive reinforcement. A positive reinforcement is psychologically important, so when you're working against something like a war, you spend two hours, you spend two days, you spend two weeks, you spend two years, the thing is still going on and you don't get that positive reinforcement that acts like a fuel to keep you going.

For me, every time the government came after me, that was my positive reinforcements. I felt that if I wasn't being effective, they wouldn't give a shit about me. The fact that they've come after me so hard means that what I'm doing is right. I'm striking a chord. I'm on the right trail here. I don't think they — the government — recognized that. So the more they came after me, the stronger I felt. I felt I must be doing something right; otherwise, they wouldn't give a shit.

ICONOCLAST: Was this a COINTELPRO kind of thing coming after you?

CAMIL: Well, what I really know because I was never in any meetings with them or anything, the government never admitted to any of this stuff. Like, basically, the government would still say I was a citizen committing criminal acts and they were doing their job. But I know that my mail was intercepted. I know my phone was tapped. I know they went to visit my parents. I know they went to visit

my parents' employers. I know they visited my friends' families, the employers of friends. They did a lot of stuff. They went to the University of Florida where I was a student. They tried to get my kicked out of school. I mean, the FBI was all over my ass, and so I knew that was happening, and I just figured I was doing good work.

ICONOCLAST: Let me understand this for a second. You're the type of person who isn't one to run from a fight. You're not the type of person who would go "underground." You're willing to stand up because that's the kind of person you became in those 20 months in Vietnam as well as what you were growing up with.

CAMIL: That's correct. I'm the kind of person that would voluntarily enlist in the Marine Corps during a time of war and would request, as soon as I got there, go to Vietnam, would go to Vietnam, get wounded, and request to stay there, get wounded again. That kind of person is not going to run or hide.

ICONOCLAST: Since then, 30-40 years ago, have your feelings changed with fighting evil with violence? Evil institutions with violence?

CAMIL: Yes and no. This is a really hard question because to start with I'm not God. I don't have the answer to everything. I don't know how to fix everything. I just do the best I can with what I've got. Sometimes there is a difference of opinion between what I believe philosophically and what I may think are the options I have.

When I was in the Marine Corps after Vietnam, I was in charge of riot control for the 10th Marine Regiment. I was NCOIC in charge of riot control for the 10th Marine Regiment, and in that riot control training, one of the things that you're taught is that you use the minimum amount of force necessary to protect lives and property. You're not the jury. You don't take the people that you're trying to control and box them in. You have to leave them an avenue of escape. If you box them in, they will be forced to fight. We don't want to fight. We want to diffuse the situation, so I still feel that way.

I believe I have the right to self-defense. If you hit me, I'm not going to turn the other cheek. I'm going to hit you back, but I think that is uncivilized behavior. I don't really know how else to make you stop hitting me. I'm going to hit you back, even though I believe that using violence to solve your problems is uncivilized. I don't know if that answers your question. It's a dilemma for me. I would not choose a way to solve a problem by picking up guns and going to kill someone. But if you came into my house with some guns to try to kill me, I would shoot back at you. I don't know if that helps you at all.

ICONOCLAST: Well, on a side note, I'm struggling with that myself in terms of my own — I don't know how to put it. I guess. Theological studies. I'm interested in, for example, Walter Wink. I don't know if you've heard of Walter Wink. He looks at the "turn the other cheek" passage in the New Testament and sees three examples of resistance that are subversive ways to fight evil without violence.

The three examples are meant to teach potential resistors how to mock their oppressors' violent tactics while at the same time raising themselves as equals. Wink says that the verse "resist not evil" was mistranslated and actually means "resist not evil with violence." Jesus was not a pussy. He was all about standing up for your humanity, but he didn't encourage doing it violently.

CAMIL: When you talk about fighting
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• **SCOTT CAMIL: REMEMBERING 'WINTER SOLDIER'** ... Continued From Page 4

evil with violence, to me violence is evil. And it bothers me that deep down inside of me, I have that reactionary person, and I work hard to be a peaceful person.

ICONOCLAST: My struggle is to try to be that person who stands up to oppression without doing it violently.

CAMIL: One of the problems with it is you have to think about the spin of things, if you will. Even if you justifiably use violence to protect yourself or for some reason you can justify it to yourself, the government and the media are going to paint it differently. They're going to use that to discredit what you're fighting for, so it's really important that the actions that you do to win people over to your side politically, to get them to do something, that you don't give the other side ammunition against you.

ICONOCLAST: Those were the examples in the passage in the Bible. It's all about using the social moray against the oppressor. It's like using their rules against them.

CAMIL: Or turning the guns around. And I believe that totally, but let's just say that for example, I'm in Crawford, Texas with Cindy Sheehan. Some people who are for the war come, and they just grab her and throw her to the ground and start kicking her. What am I going to do? I'm going to fight. That's just clear and simple. I might not like what I've done when it's over, but I wouldn't know what else to do. I'm not going to say, "Please don't hit her." But there's going to come a point as soon as their hands get on her, my hands are going to go on them. That disturbs me that I haven't figured out or learned after all these years doing this peace work a different way to deal with that kind of situation. I guess I don't know what else I would do.

ICONOCLAST: Because this whole "fight and flight" thing is that reptilian part of us and I don't, either. The only thing I can say right now is that, well, it's a military thing: "the target determines the weapons." Depending on the situation, you take an action to get a reaction.

CAMIL: The other part that makes it hard for me is when I look at the big picture. I was once one of those guys, one of those right-wing close-minded violent kind of people. When I first came home from Vietnam, I used to pick fights with anti-war people. I hated them. I thought they were unpatriotic. I thought they didn't know what they were talking about. I thought they were cowards. I thought they were communist sympathizers and I thought I had the right to kick their fucking ass.

I changed through education, so to me the fact that I was able to change means that you can take hard-lined people, and with the right information and tactics, you can win them over. That's a very strong understanding that there's nobody that can't be won over because I don't think there was anybody further to the right than me. I voted for George Wallace in 1968 when I was in the Marine Corps. I thought that Wallace would take care of the black problem and that LeMay would take care of the yellow problem. That's pretty far out there. But through education and understanding, I matured and my position changed. So to me, if I can change my position, other people can be changed too. I just haven't found the key to doing that.

I would say that the biggest hole in this argument that I just made to you is that I'm in touch with many of the guys I was with in Vietnam. I went to a reunion because I was one of the guys in the unit early, and because of my ruthlessness, I had a reputation, so guys would look up



BOOK SIGNING — Scott Camil signs book at 1919 Hemphill in Fort Worth after a showing of *Winter Soldier*, a documentary about over 125 veterans who spoke of atrocities they had witnessed and committed in Vietnam during the three days of the Winter Soldier Investigation, Jan. 31-Feb. 2, 1971, at a Howard Johnson motel in Detroit.

— Staff Photo By Nathan Diebenow

to me. At the reunion, they were unhappy with me because of my anti-war work against the Vietnam War. There was a lieutenant there, and he said to me in front of everybody, "Sgt. Camil, you've done a disservice to the country and a disservice to the Marine Corps, and you've done a disservice to the men of our unit."

That made me feel really bad, but this guy was sitting a wheelchair, and when I got wounded on Feb. 18, 1967, which was the first time I got wounded, on that day he was also wounded, and he lost both of his legs. He lost 10 percent of his men, and we killed 292 men, women, and children. We just wiped them out. And he said to me at the reunion, "Sgt. Camil, they got what they deserved."

I felt sorry for him because here he is disabled in the wheelchair. Can't have sex. Can't walk. Can't play volleyball. And wouldn't I be bitter if I was him? I felt really bad because he was upset with me, but my reputation was as such that they made me a moderator for the 1st Marine Battalion listserv. Then when this war started cooking up, I started posting stuff saying that this was bullshit. People got really mad at me, and they kicked me off as moderator. They kicked me out of the fucking listserv, so now I'm not even welcome at reunions anymore.

These guys are guys that know me. What really gets me is the fact that they saw the same stuff I saw in Vietnam, and I came back and that stuff made me not like war. And they came back and now

“But I know that my mail was intercepted. I know my phone was tapped. I know they went to visit my parents. I know they went to visit my parents' employers. I know they visited my friends' families, the employers of friends. They did a lot of stuff. They went to the University of Florida where I was a student. They tried to get my kicked out of school. I mean, the FBI was all over my ass, and so I knew that was happening, and I just figured I was doing good work.”

— Scott Camil

their kids are serving in Afghanistan and Iraq and they're fucking proud. I don't have any understanding of how that could be possible. I would never want my children to experience war. I experienced it. I didn't like it. I don't want my children to experience it.

And that means, if I don't want my kids to experience it, I don't want your kids to experience it, either. I can't grasp how come the majority of the people who I'm in touch with in from the Vietnam War think the Vietnam War was right, what we're doing in Iraq is right, and are proud to send their kids into that fucking machine. I don't get it. I really have a hard time understanding how that could be possible.

ICONOCLAST: But those kids that are going and do have problems with the military, you're there to help them, right?

CAMIL: Well, I'm a counselor for the GI Rights Hotline. So, of course, we take lots of calls. It bugs me that I get a picture of things that the public doesn't see, but because the way our group works, I can't have a press conference and tell the press, "Hey, they're doing this. They're doing that."

But there's so much stuff going on that — they're treating these guys so bad, it's incredible. In some ways, things are good for them. They get better food than we had. They have better equipment than we had, but recruiters are still lying their fucking asses off to get guys in. The military is breaking their promises with guys, and the military is really sticking it to them in a very dishonest way. I feel bad for these guys.

One of the guys who I counseled who was in the Marine Corps just got out on a medical discharge. He is now getting ready to go to Iraq working for Blackwater, and he said, "Where else can I earn \$18,000 a month and not have to worry about paying for taxes?" He doesn't even believe in the fucking war. He's doing it for the job. And to him, he had to do it before for a lot less money. And he couldn't quit when he wanted to. Now he can quit when he wants to. And he's getting paid a lot more to do the same stuff. And here's a guy who I counseled and helped him get out of the service and now he has put himself right back in that position.

It's complicated. I have strong feelings about this idea about supporting the troops, and what happens in that it is the truth when Bush says, "If you speak against the war, you give moral support to the enemy." That's the truth. But the fact of the matter is when the war is wrong, it's your duty to speak against the war. You don't support troops by sending them somewhere to risk their life and limb for something that is unnecessary.

When a person joins the military, he has this belief that the government is going to be responsible with him, and that's not the case. The government is not being responsible with these people who are going into the military. War is really a failure of diplomacy. War is a criminal act. It's a human rights violation, and it's just organized murder. I don't even have the understanding why war can be acceptable as a means of conflict resolution.

I'm on the Sierra Club executive committee. We went to court to stop a cement plant from being built in the city next to our city because we didn't want the fallout from the smokestacks from the plant. We lost, so we didn't grab our guns out of our closets and go to this other city to shoot the place up. There was a civilized process. We entered that civilized pro

Continued On Next Page

Connecticut Fights 'No Child Left Behind' In Court

NEW HAVEN, Conn. — The state of Connecticut said during a court hearing last week that because "No Child Left Behind" is an unfunded policy mandate, it will eventually dumb down tests in public schools.

Attorney General Richard Blumenthal explained to the U.S. District Court in New Haven that since federal funding left Connecticut \$41.6 million short to comply with the law, school districts around

the state would have to use multiple choice tests instead of more expensive written tests that better challenge students.

"There is always the option of dumbing down the test to the point that would be inadequate, and we are not willing to do that," Blumenthal said. "We're left with no choice but to either defy the statute or (follow) an interpretation that we be-

lieve is mistaken and misguided."

The attorney representing the U.S. Education Department Elizabeth Goitein of the U.S. Justice Department said Connecticut was ignoring its responsibilities, though well aware of the rules that accompany the federal funding.

Connecticut is the first state to seek a court challenge against the NCLB policy on standardized testing. NCLB mandates

that students test in grades three, five, and seven, but in Connecticut students are tested in grades four, six and eight. If schools fail to improve their performance, they can be forced to close their doors.

Although Connecticut boasts the highest graduation rate in the country, it is also has the worst gap in academic achievement between rich and poor children.

Challenges to NCLB have come from other states such as Utah, which passing a bill in defiance of the law.

Patriot Act Good For Five More Weeks

WASHINGTON — Congress last week extended the Patriot Act for another five weeks to give more time to Senate negotiators and the White House to compromise on new protections for civil liberties.

Democrats and a few Senate Republicans want to establish an appeals system for banks, libraries, and Internet service providers when the FBI demands for their clients' personal and financial records.

Sen. Russell Feingold (D-Wis.) cast the only vote against breathing new life into the 16 provisions that were to have expired on Dec. 31, 2005. No votes were cast by Sens. Jeff Bingaman (D-N.M.), Conrad Burns (R-Mont.), Pete Domenici (R-N.M.), and Trent Lott (R-Miss.).

The last vote on the Patriot act, which would have made most of the expiring provisions permanent, was blocked due to worries over the extent of police privileges.

White House Emails Turn Up Missing In CIA Leak Case

WASHINGTON — Capitol Hill Blue reported last week that some White House emails from 2003 were not archived and therefore are unable for use in the investigation into the leak of the name of covert CIA agent Valerie Plame.

The revelation came after the special prosecutor in the criminal case against Vice President Dick Cheney's former chief of staff I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby was accused of withholding evidence Libby's lawyers say they need to prepare for the trial which is set for January 2007.

Special Counsel Patrick Fitzgerald told the defense team in a Jan 23 letter that his office was unaware of such evidence and presumes it has been destroyed.

"In an abundance of caution, we ad-

vised you that we have learned that not all e-mail of the Office of Vice President and the Executive Office of the President for certain time periods in 2003 was preserved through the normal archiving process on the White House computer system," wrote Fitzgerald.

Cheney's office said it is cooperating with the case, in which the government charged Libby with five counts of perjury, obstruction, and lying to the FBI about his knowledge of Plame's identity and the leak of it to the press.

According to The Presidential Records Act of 1978, records regarding official government duties are government property, not the property of the president or vice president, and are taken into custody by the National Archives when the administration changes.

• SCOTT CAMIL: REMEMBERING 'WINTER SOLDIER' ... Continued From Page 5

cess. We didn't get our way, but because we are civilized, we agreed to abide by the civilized decision that was reached.

Right now the State of Florida, where I live, is in court and is suing the State of Georgia and claims that Georgia is taking too much water from the river and diverting it to Atlanta and we're not getting our share of the water. We don't take the Florida National Guard and go up there and blow up the fucking dikes to get the water to flow the way we want. There's a civilized process. The State of Florida may win and it may lose, but it will live with that decision because we're civilized.

I don't understand why when it's one nation versus another nation, it's okay to bomb homes, to bomb schools, to bomb infrastructure, to kill innocent civilians, call them "collateral damage" and just try to beat people into submission by making the price they have to pay for that different opinion more than they can afford. That price is the death of their families. Why is that acceptable? I don't even get that.

And then you talk about rules of war. The idea of rules is that rules imply some kind of civilized process. As soon as you allow the murder of each other to solve the rules, people are going to do what is necessary to stay alive. There's no referees in war walking around throwing flags when you don't do stuff right. As soon as you realize that life is on the line, it becomes about survival. Politics are gone. It's about survival. Kill them before they kill us. Protect me. Protect my men. I don't understand the idea that the public has that this is civilized. If you have the ability to abide by the rules, the first rule is you can't solve your problems by murdering each other.

If you have this idea of what the government's idea is that because our troops are in Iraq, you have to support the policy in order to not give moral support to the enemy and hurt the troops, if you allow that argument to stand, that means anytime the government wants support for policies regardless of how wrong or criminal that policy is, all they have to do is send the troops there first and that automatically guarantees the support. That is a terrible precedent. There ought to be support for the policy because the policy is right, not because there are people's lives on the line getting support so you have to agree with what's going on. That's just ridiculous.

ICONOCLAST: Well, switching gears here, where do you stand on this idea of mandatory public service for students after high school?

CAMIL: I love that idea, and basically, I would even support the draft. I worked against the draft in Vietnam, and when I was working against the draft, I thought the Constitution says, "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude should exist within the United States," and the draft is involuntary servitude. It was really clear to me.

But people said, "Scott, you're being so short-sighted. If you have an all volunteer army, then those people will be career people, and they're not going to say anything bad about what's going on. They're not going to tell the truth because they're not going to risk their careers. The public is not going to be able to know the truth about what's going on. There's going to be wars everywhere and the military is just going to be a mercenary force." I said, "Oh, bullshit." It turned out that they were right.

So enlist everybody when they graduate high school to serve, whether it be in

the military, in the Peace Corps, Habitat for Humanity, an emergency room down the street, and people will pay more attention to what the government is doing because they would be an investment. It would be their children. I wouldn't allow anyone to be left out for any reason. There's something that you can do for the country, and I think that's really important.

I would support mandatory service. They do it in Israel, and I would support bringing in the draft, only so it would force the American people to be more responsible for what this government is going. When we talk bad about Iraq, and what's going on in Iraq, the government this and the government that, what they're really saying is "I'm the fucking government. And the buck doesn't stop with the president. The buck stops with me. I'm the fucking employer. I'm paying the bills. I put these people in their fucking jobs. It's my fucking responsibility."

So it's really easy to blame the fucking government and sit on your ass. And the fact of the matter is that if you're sitting on your ass, you're the fucking problem.

ICONOCLAST: Well, Scott, I'm at the end of my rope. Do you have anything to add?

CAMIL: I was on the national board of directors of Veterans for Peace in the early 1990s. We passed a resolution at a national convention thanking Jane Fonda and honoring Jane Fonda for her years of patriotic service to the United States. Veterans for Peace is made up of veterans from Korea, World War II, Vietnam — there weren't just Vietnam Veterans, and we were able to pass that resolution. So this idea that all veterans were against Jane Fonda is a load of fucking crap.

INFO

<www.WinterSoldierFilm.com>

Police Apologize To Sheehan, Rep.'s Wife

WASHINGTON — Capitol Police apologized to anti-war activist Cindy Sheehan and Beverly Young, wife of Rep. C.W. "Bill" Young, R-Fla., for removing them from President Bush's State of the Union address for donning T-shirts with political messages.

A spokesman for the Capitol Police said the department also intends to drop a misdemeanor charge of "unlawful conduct" on Capitol grounds against Sheehan.

Sheehan was taken away in handcuffs from the visitors gallery last Tuesday night. Young was, however, not arrested because she left the gallery on her own before Bush's speech.

Sheehan's T-shirt read, "2245 Dead. How many more?" which refers to the number of soldiers killed in Iraq. Young's shirt read, "Support the Troops — Defending Our Freedom."

Bill Young said he was still upset by the Capitol Police's conduct toward his wife and suggested the police officers take "sensitivity training."

Several law enforcement and congressional officials noted that the two women seemed to have violated unwritten customs associated with the annual address, which is supposed to be a formal gathering.

In years past, guests wearing shirts appearing to espouse a political stance have been asked to cover them up or replaced.

Rules of etiquette, such as prohibitions from reading, smoking, eating, etc., are normally written on gallery passes, but such passes are not distributed during the State of the Union address as it is assumed attendees will behave appropriately, said the Deputy House Sergeant at Arms.

Sheehan For Senate?

While attending the World Social Forum in Venezuela with thousands of other anti-war and anti-globalization activists, Sheehan said she is thinking about challenging Sen. Dianne Feinstein in the Democratic primary.

The challenge is intended as a protest against the California lawmaker's support for the war in Iraq, said Sheehan, whose soldier/son Casey died in Iraq in 2004.

Feinstein's campaign manager denied that the senator supported the president's policies, yet believes that quick troop withdrawal is not the right idea.

Candidates for office must register for the June primary by Feb. 14.

In Caracas during the six-day forum, Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez suggested to Sheehan that she run for president.

"He said, 'Why don't I run for president?'" she said. "I just laughed."

White House: Texas Redistricting Follows Voting Rights Act

WASHINGTON — The White House defended the state of Texas in a Supreme Court battle over Rep. Tom Delay's 2003 redistricting plan last week. In a brief, the Bush administration said the plan satisfies the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

As a result of this latest redistricting plan, which gave the Texas House delegation a GOP majority, Republicans gained control of the House.

Challengers to the plan oppose it on grounds that it violates the equal protec-

tion cause in the Constitution and that it compromises the voting strength of black and Hispanic voters, a violation.

Last year, the plan stood up to a U.S. District Court panel of three judges, but the Supreme Court will take up the case on March 1.

Senior Justice officials overruled a recommendation by Justice Department lawyers to scrap the Texas plan on grounds that it would hurt black and Hispanic voters.

The current case, however, revolves around different legal standards, instead focusing on another part of the Voting Rights Act, specifically Section 2 which hinders states from negating minority groups' voting power.

The Bush administration's brief defends changes made to the Dallas-Fort Worth district, saying that blacks were not the majority of the voters in the old district. The old district with its voting population of more than 50 percent black

and Hispanic was once represented by Democrat Martin Frost.

Opponents say that the old Dallas-Fort Worth district was unfairly broken and that the plan could have created one more Hispanic majority districts in Texas added to the six made in south and west Texas. The White House, though, disagrees saying that the Hispanic districts are fair.

NORML's 2005 Conference Slated April 20-22

SAN FRANCISCO — The National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws will hold its annual national conference April 20-22 at the Holiday Inn Golden Gateway in San Francisco.

The speaker, panel and entertainment line-up will be announced soon. To suggest a speaker or a panel at NORML 2006, email the suggestion to (media@norml.org).

Over 550 NORML supporters attended the 2005 NORML conference. Last year's speakers included best-selling author and TV travel guru Rick Steves, NORML's new executive director Allen St. Pierre, former

NFL star Mark Stepnoski, and WAMM's Valerie Corral.

The Holiday Inn Golden Gateway has discounted 'NORML room rates from April 19-April 23. A single or double bed is \$109 per night. The Executive Level Guest Room, single or double, is \$129 per night. The One Bedroom Parlor Suite is \$250 per night.

To reserve a room by phone, call (415) 441-4000 or (800) 465-4329 (discount code = 'NOR') or email <reservations@sfhigg.com>. For more information, visit NORML's website.

U.S. Military Will Never Leave: Iraqis

WASHINGTON — Most Iraqis think the United States military will not entirely withdraw from their country, but 35 percent of them — mainly Sunni Arabs — think foreign military forces should leave within six months, according to a new survey.

A majority of Iraqis also believe if the forces left, the impact would be positive, which anti-war advocates have consistently said.

Sunnis are typically more skeptical of the United States' plans since the March 2003 invasion than the Shi'a and Kurds. Eighty-eight percent of the Sunni community approves of "attacks on U.S.-led forces" in Iraq, while 41 percent of Shiites and 16 percent of Kurds agreed.

The Programme on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) at the University of Maryland for WorldPublicOpinion.org conducted this survey though face-to-face interviews.

TFU Okays Policy To Help Family Farmers, Ranchers

WACO — At last week's annual Texas Farmers Union convention in San Antonio, members of the organization agreed to support extending the farm bill, call for immediate disasters assistance from congress, and continue the organization's opposition to a privately held National Animal Identification System (NAIS).

"The Farm Bill, disaster assistance and ensuring that a new animal identification system protects producers' pri-

vacy are the top issues on Texas Farmers' minds," said TFU President Wes Sims.

TFU is advocating that Congress extend the 2002 Farm Bill for an additional year to ensure the continuation of the farm safety net and other vital farm bill programs.

"Congress and the administration continue to raid funding from farm bill programs through the budget reconciliation process, despite the fact that the farm bill has actually saved the government money," Sims said. "Now is not the time to allow Congress to start a new farm bill from scratch that would jeopardize programs that help keep us afloat."

Texas farmers and ranchers have also been hit hard by hurricanes, drought and wildfires, yet Congress has yet to help local producers deal with these economic losses through disaster assistance. At its convention TFU urged Congress and the president to provide immediate and meaningful disaster assistance to help rural community's deal with weather circumstances beyond their control.

TFU also reiterated its position on NAIS, opposing the U.S. Department of Agriculture's recent plans to make a privately controlled system. TFU wants to ensure that any kind of system implemented is maintained by a public agency.

Wes Sims, Sweetwater was re-elected for the 6th term as President. Mike Oldham, Shamrock was re-elected for 3rd term as Vice President. Dean Slaughter, Perryton; Lynn Hagan, Carbon were re-elected as Directors for a 2nd term. Terry Priesmeyer, El Campo and Shorty Miller, McGregor were elected as Directors for their first term.

Savings' Rate Hits 'Great Depression' Lows

WASHINGTON — While digging deep into their savings, American consumers outspent their income growth in December, according to the Commerce Department last week. The effect helped cause the savings' rate for all of 2005 to fall to its lowest level since the Great Depression.

The Department's figures indicate that consumer spending increased by 0.9 percent in December, while incomes only saw a 0.4 percent rise. Thus to keep up with spending, the savings' rate fell into negative territory at minus 0.5 percent, the lowest annual savings rate since a decline of 1.5 percent in 1933.

Consumers spent part of their savings last year because the housing market, among other things, gave them the illusion of being wealthy. However, this market is showing signs of cooling as mortgage rates rise.

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The 11th Hour Is Here. Where Is The Senate?

Let's see. When was 9/11/01?

Last year?

Nope.

Er, uh, I believe it was in 2001.

Time for math.

9/11/2001 to 9/11/2005.

Why, that was four years ago.

Weren't we going to move with haste to secure our borders after the infamous attacks on the WTC and the Pentagon?

I thought that was a priority.

Must've been mistaken.

Here in Texas we have a growing border problem. Invasions onto U.S. soil are escalating.

We have two so-called U.S. Senators: Hutchison and Cornyn. The latter proudly chairs the subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security, and Citizenship; and Emerging Threats and Capabilities.

What's wrong with this picture?

Nothing's been done.

Where have Hutchison and Cornyn been hiding?

They are both Republicans, and Republicans dominate the House, the Senate, and the Executive Branch.

Are they awaiting the bewitching hour, high noon at midnight, to make a move?

Mexican 'Soldiers' Cross In Hudspeth County Again

EL PASO — Men appearing to be Mexican soldiers carrying automatic weapons crossed into the United States through Hudspeth County, east of El Paso, according to U.S. law enforcement officers. The violation of the international boundary by Mexican military personnel marked the second in two weeks.

This latest incident was reported by a KFOX crew while talking to a Hudspeth County sheriff's deputy about the last week's boarder violation before sunset on Tuesday night. During the interview, three men who looked like soldiers entered the United States but the Deputy and the news crew immediately left the area as the armed men attempted to flank them.

The week prior, Hudspeth deputies chased a caravan of three vehicles on I-10. Though one vehicle was captured, one escaped, and the other became stuck in the Rio Grande and was burned by heavily armed men in military clothing who crossed the boarder to rescue smugglers.

The Mexican Consulate in El Paso has said before that governmental policy prohibits armed Mexican soldiers to operate less than three miles from the U.S. border.

According to the U.S. Border Patrol, Mexican authorities said Tuesday night after the latest incident that the three men were Mexican soldiers. However, the next day, the Mexican Consulate changed its story saying the armed men were State Police investigating last week's smuggling incident. The men were to remain in the area for several more days, the Consulate reported.

Local law officers said Texas Governor Rick Perry intended to release almost \$4 million more in funding for border security assistance through Operation Linebacker.

The Trenchwalker

By W. Leon Smith



Will they wait until the proverbial drought has dried up the river before ruminating about building a dam?

Four years!

We have a wishy-washy Commander in Chief, who snubbed a recent hearing regarding this matter, not showing up (what else is new?) and Sen. Cornyn now proclaims the Republican Party has failed to get things done. He is calling some recently seized mercenary weapons in a state he pretends to represent "a stark reminder of the vulnerability created by the federal government's failure to secure our borders."

Mr. Cornyn, are you powerless in the federal government?

He is correct when he says, "Texans are rightly concerned by the state of our borders, and the potential means for a terrorist to exploit that vulnerability."

Mr. Cornyn, Texans have been complaining loudly since 9/11.

We're glad someone finally told you about it.

Actually, Mr. Cornyn introduced the Comprehensive Enforcement and Immigration Reform Act, S. 1438, last summer, intended to answer all the ills in Borderland. But according to his office, if something like this is passed, it will take years for appropriations to accumulate to gradually build it, and costs are unknown. The Act is pending Senate scrutiny on March 27, and, in the meantime, the Senator has scheduled a hearing on March 1 to address border violence, to show he finally gets the message.

There have actually been several plans bantered around Washington, including one whereby Sen. Hutchison wants to give state and local officials authority to arrest, detain, and prosecute illegal aliens, as well as create a volunteer border marshal program.

In other words, she's for adding to the workload of local officials and bringing in a bunch of vigilantes to shoot and ask questions later.

Ms. Hutchison is a lady who can hide her own Easter eggs.

Several dynamics are at work relating to the problem.

First, you have 11 million immigrants in this country illegally, many of whom have worked here for years and have U.S.-born children. According to the Center for Immigration Studies, the undocumented population is growing faster than immigrants with legal status.

Birth rates are another consideration. In 2002, for instance, about 280,000 children were born to undocumented mothers (nearly 10 percent of all births in the U.S.).

Then there is the problem with not enough ag workers. A mass deportation would cripple crop production in several states.

President Bush wants to allow illegal immigrants already here to sign up as guest workers, but they would have to pay a stiff fine before being given a three-year visa, with a possibility of renewal for another three years. After that, they would have to return to their home countries for at least a year before reapplying for entry into the United States.

Practically speaking, it won't work.

Put yourself in an immigrant's shoes. Pay a big fine? Disrupt your new roots, your family, especially if over time it falls into mixed immigration status, leave your trusted employer, and be banished to Mexico for a year? Go back to what, after all that time?

Mexicans aren't stupid.

A better plan (S 1033/HR 2330) has been hatched by two unlikely Senate comrades, Sens. John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Ted Kennedy (D-Mass), who have drafted a bipartisan guest worker program that allows undocumented immigrants in the U.S. to enroll in a temporary work program after paying fines and penalties for entering the country illegally.

Their approach is more comprehensive in that it provides for better border control and better treatment of immigrants.

To quote Sen. Kennedy, "We've tried enforcement alone and it has failed. In the past 10 years, the government has spent more than \$20 billion, tripled the number of Border Patrol agents, built fences and adopted other border enforcement laws.

"Yet none of our efforts have ever been adequate to halt illegal immigration, for the simple reason that vast numbers of American companies have made a practice of hiring illegal workers to reduce costs and bolster profits.

"In fact, according to recent studies, our border enforcement strategies have backfired. In 2002, we spent \$1,700 to make each arrest, compared with \$300 in 1992. The probability of being caught fell from 20 percent or higher in the mid-1990s to 5 percent in 2002. We're catching fewer people, and it's costing more.

"Arizona Sen. John McCain and I have a common-sense plan called the Secure America Act.

"This bill combines tough, targeted enforcement with adequate legal channels and proper screening for workers and family members crossing the border. It offers a genuine alternative, not an amnesty, not a free pass, not an automatic pardon.

"We offer sensible plans to encourage unauthorized workers to come forward to receive work permits and earn legal status. They will pay a substantial fine and go through rigorous security and criminal background checks.

"Those who want permanent legal status must pay all of their back taxes, learn English, maintain a strong work record, stay out of trouble, and wait their turn.

"Because of its sensible approach it has earned the support of business and labor as well as Republicans and Democrats.

"One of the mistakes of the past is to assume that we can control illegal immigration on our own. Our plan holds other countries accountable by requiring migration agreements with the United States, by encouraging economic development in those countries, and by partnering with Mexico on health care access so our nation is not unfairly affected with the costs of administering health care to Mexican nationals.

"America will do its part. Now we expect Mexico and others to do theirs, too.

"The American people don't want open borders, but they don't want closed borders either. They want smart borders.

"These reforms will not only make us safer, but they will also eliminate the culture of illegality in our economy that

undermines wages and working conditions for all workers, including Americans.

"This is the best opportunity for change that we've had in years. We are a country of immigrants, and we will always be, and our laws must be true to that proud heritage.

"By enacting meaningful, comprehensive immigration reform we will prove that we can be both a nation of immigrants and a nation of laws."

The Secure America Act would create a system for information sharing among international, federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies. Not only would the McCain-Kennedy law add another level of protection by creating a Border Security Committee to advise the U.S. Department of Homeland Security regarding border security, the Secretary of State would create a framework for open communication and coordination among the U.S., Mexico, and Canada.

We agree. It is a sensible plan, since it extends to undocumented workers the opportunity to earn their way to legal status by becoming taxpayers. This includes learning the English language, and becoming committed to American ideals. Their visas would be valid for three years and the door would be open to providing permanent residency and citizenship.

National security procedures would be inclusive, involving background scrutiny and other tests to assure better control of the flow of individuals between countries.

Sen. Cornyn's press release notes that, according to the Border Patrol, "since October 1, 2005, there have been a total of 191 incidents of assaults on their officers. There have been 19 shootings or assaults with weapons, 92 rockings, 47 physical assaults, and 15 vehicle assaults."

These are terrorist attacks on our country, right here in Texas.

But when it comes to border security, we aren't alone. There are growing security issues on the beaches of the West Coast that are being ignored, with ship cargoes going unchecked. Border problems are not only on landlocked connections, but extend to our oceans.

It's time to shore up all of our borders, something that certainly should have been done immediately in the wake of 9/11.

There is no excuse for the delay. And now, we are in the 11th hour.

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Budget Cuts Yet Another Attack On Poor, Elderly, Students

A new Civil War is brewing in the United States.

When the House elitists voted to bleed basic entitlement programs that benefit the elderly, the poor, and college students, they set in motion a series of setbacks that will move the United States closer to third-world status.

The vote was 216-214, with 13 Republicans, 200 Democrats, and one Independent voting against the measure, but it was not enough to put a halt to the insanity of the lock-step neo-conservative branch of the Republican Party.

The House vote came hours after President Bush told the nation he wanted tax cuts for the wealthy, such as oil barons, to be made permanent.

On the chopping block were entitlement programs such as Medicaid, child support, and student lending — plus others that provide a safety net for Middle Americans.

Now, the disabled elderly on Medicaid will have to fend more for themselves, students will find that college is no longer an option, and initiatives to demand child support by wayward fathers will be curtailed.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, the Medicaid changes will impose new costs on 13 million poor recipients and terminate coverage for 65,000 Medicaid enrollees (20 percent of

the program's recipients), not to mention forcing the states to pay for child support enforcement, which is simply moving taxes from one governmental entity to another, if the states bite.

At the same time, the feds are considering \$70 billion in proposed Republican tax cuts, mainly for the wealthy.

"You don't have to be much beyond sixth grade to know that's going to add to your deficits," said Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-Md.), when comparing the \$70 billion in proposed cuts to the \$39 billion removed from programs helping the poor.

This move by Congress, at the behest of President Bush, will increase the divide between the rich and the poor while at the same time promoting a vanishing middle class. The neo-conservative fascist mantra proclaims that the rich are "good" while the poor are "evil," and financial segregation is a means to an end.

The United States is in one of the worst financial situations it has ever faced, with runaway spending abroad, companies such as Exxon gouging the crap out of Americans (which the White House supports), and our own Congress stomping on its poorest citizens.

Americans must act soon to replace politicians who have oil and blood on their hands, or face hardships reminiscent of the Great Depression.

— W. Leon Smith

Economic Tidbits Neighbor Bush Left Out

As Uncle Hugh used to say, "The rich get richer and the poor get drunk."

So, how'd you come out in Neighbor Bush's state of the union?

Boy, I had no idea I had it so good.

I thought the two biggest auto manufacturers were handing out pink slips like a lingerie shop after St. Valentine's Day.

Imagine how much better I felt knowing that the 40 percent growth in the gap between rich people and everybody else is so robust.

And I'm really relieved that the United States hasn't been invaded by the Mexican Army more than 200 times during the last decade to smuggle drugs and immigrants.

I'll now be opening the spare bedroom to exploited Third World workers who'll be doing all those jobs Americans want to get paid to do. (An aside to Vicente Fox here: When you dance with the devil, the devil doesn't learn Spanish. And neither do your grandchildren.)

It's a good sign that of seven economic indicators used to measure economic recovery, only corporate profits has advanced above any growth rate percentages since WW II, while GDP, net worth, private investment, personal spending, and income from wages and salaries are circling the bowl? All are now at their lowest point since anybody bombed Japan.

Job growth only managed to out-pace one stagnant period:

You guessed it.

The Reagan Disaster.

I was also gratified to learn that the Iraqi's are still happy to have our army running their country.

Imagine how the war would be going if they were pissed off.

But in the event that you Yankees thought that Texas is better off by virtue of having a semi-native son in the White House, let me fill you in on some economic tidbits that Neighbor Bush left out.

Must've got too close to his single-session reading limit.

The income gap between the wealthiest and poorest Texans is the second highest in the nation, according to the non-partisan, non-profit Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

New York may outrank us, but just you wait until we get some guest workers in here!

Texas is number one when it comes to disparity in middle class vs. rich folks' incomes, however.

Yes, those wacky suburbanites who gave you Tom DeLay have nothing but altruistic motives when it comes to politics.

They were more than willing to give Hot Tub Tom a second chance. (An aside to the people of Sugarland: When you dance with the devil, it's your wallet he's feeling up, not you.)

Call To Mind



By Don M. Fisher

Texas' middle class is like sheetrock: Made to get screwed to the wall.

Texas has about 9 million jobs out of a population of 22.5 million, and has median cash income of \$26,757, or \$12.86 per hour.

Half of Texans earn more; half less.

Not too bad, until you dig into the numbers from Texas Department of Human Resources (the Unemployment Office).

Half the workers in the Lone Star State earn between \$17,000 (\$8.45 an hour) and \$43,000 (\$20.86 per.)

Entry level wages are \$15,335, or 7.37 percent.

Eyes glazing over yet?

Ok, about 2.6 percent of the state's population, mostly women and minorities, make minimum wage, \$5.15 an hour.

So, of the half of the state's workers making less than \$26K, more than half are making more than \$10,000 less.

That is, at or near an entry level salary.

On the other end of the spectrum, however, .3 percent, or about 33,450 Texans are executives with an entry level average of about \$70,895 to an "experienced" salary average of \$179,608.

Now, there are about 105,501 entry level and 778,050 experienced middle management jobs, about nine percent of the workforce, who earn an average of \$39,745 for entry level to \$105,501 for experience.

Now, consider that the per capita income for the above-mentioned 22.5 million is around \$30,000, or *higher* than the median income, here's what you get:

Somewhere around 70 percent of working Texans are making less than the per capita income.

Another eight to 10 percent is getting paychecks somewhere north of the 50 percent median limit of \$43,384, but still holding the biggest salary average down to less than \$179,608.

And that's only .3 percent of the population.

That leaves a huge hole in the space-time continuum that boosts the per capita income for 22 million people by \$4,000 per year.

In other words, the vast majority of rich people in Texas don't work.

They are worthless.

Burns

Pimples on the sweaty exposed butt cracks of those Texans who actually make the place run.

Welfare cheats, considering they're getting the Big Bush Bucks right now.

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FDR And The King

“...the only thing we have to fear is fear itself...”

That famous phrase was uttered early on by Franklin Delano Roosevelt during his first Inaugural Address, March 4, 1933. Although many, yours truly included, have erroneously attributed it to America's entry into World War II, he was speaking about the raging Depression. It set the tone for the rest of the speech, his next four years in office, and, as fate would have it, the balance of the man's life.

Being neither oracle nor prophet, FDR could not possibly have known of the impending births of a relatively small bunch of individuals, and the havoc their existences — once brought together — would thrust upon our Nation and the rest of the Planet.

Neither could he have foreseen the event, just shy of 60 years after his own forthcoming Pearl Harbor, that would open the door for these brigands to put their plot into full motion.

The first thing we have to overcome is false fear that Herr Ubermeister Karl Rove has been seeding American minds and hearts with since 9/11.

As I've noted here in this column, during both his speeches to the Conservative 1% privileged folks of New York State and more recently the RNC, the Minister of Pulling W's Strings has no new ideas to introduce to the voters of America.

Why would the GOP need any? There's already misaligned voting districts unfavorable to minorities and other Democratic-based demographics; contracts for electronic voting machines hard-wired to deliver pro-GOP votes; voting officials in key precincts who are certain to do their duty and keep the riff-raff out; states like Georgia with new laws, enacted by Republican-dominated legislatures, that make it difficult if not impossible for minorities and poor to vote.

FDR's line, and I've never before read or heard the rest of it quoted, went like so: “...the only thing we have to fear is fear itself— nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance.”

This is exactly what Rove has counted on, and gotten away with — nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror. Terror from what? This filters down from Herr Karl through Bush #43, Dark Lord the Dick Cheney, Rumsfeld, Condi “But I really am a single, middle-aged Black woman?” Rice, Ken “Can't Hold a Real Job” Mehlman, and the rest of the war-loving, torture-approving members of the Senate, Congress, the Military hierarchy, to be spread like manure by the mainstream press, then beaten into far too many skulls by the extreme rightist talk radio clucks.

According to one poll I noticed the other day, 76% of Republican respondents are still buying his bullshit that somebody is going to attack us, and it's a good idea that we send our young adults into Iran to be slaughtered there, too.

What we genuinely have to fear are the Republicans who spout “Constitution this” and “Liberty that” and “our real Democracy” — while in the meantime they've got the machinery in high gear dismantling each and every personal freedom that makes America great.

And with each passing second and every shady deal these guys' money clips just keep getting heavier and fatter.

Tom DeLay has lost his position as House Majority Leader, thank Heaven.



Out Of The Blue

By
Jerry
Tenuto

So who's the frontrunner for the position? Roy Blunt, the very guy Smiler Tom groomed to be his Capo. What in the hell kind of reform is that?

While we're on the subject, it seems that a wise move for the House Republicans might be to get rid of Dennis Hastert as Speaker. He's not without stink and manure-encrusted shoes from the K Street lobbyist fiasco.

Even when Hastert suggested changing the rules about lobbyists, many within the GOP rank and file went ballistic. These good folks don't want any reform at all, schmucks like Jerry Weller, the DeLay/Hastert bootlicker of my 11th Illinois District, a taker of Abramoff money, who rubber stamps anything the White House or Smiler Tom says to approve.

Then there's the other bootlicker in the neighboring 15th District, Tim Johnson. Tweedledufus and Tweedledufuser.

It will be a much brighter day when the chamber of the U.S. House of Representatives is improved by the removal of the two aforementioned wastes of space, and they are replaced with Democratic newcomers Dr. David Gill (15th) and former CIA counter terrorism operative John Pavich (11th), among others.

Also in that speech, FDR took a shot directly at greed and corruption: “*Recognition of the falsity of material wealth as the standard of success goes hand in hand with the abandonment of the false belief that public office and high political position are to be valued only by the standards of pride of place and personal profit; and there must be an end to a conduct in banking and in business which too often has given to a sacred trust the likeness of callous and selfish wrongdoing...*”

“*Restoration calls, however, not for changes in ethics alone. This nation asks for action, and action now.*”

Not one person outside of the Democratic Party has taken an honest stand to address the serious level of corruption that permeates the Republican machine. In truth, it's more appropriate to call the lot a cabal.

We as a Nation have far more to fear from these incompetents who neither wish to nor know how to govern for the people. There are now four sitting justices on the Supremes who are members of the Federalist Society. It's sad, but most Americans don't know that. Sadder still, even more of us have no idea who or what the Federalist Society is.

Short version, the FS was begun in 1982 by Edwin Meese, William Rehnquist, et al, with funding from Richard Mellon Scaife and cohorts to reach out to and recruit young Conservative law students for internships with the Supremes and other prestigious government positions. The intent was to get American courts back to the far Right, to what this small group of individuals considered to be their proper place.

In other words, disgruntled rich white judges, attorneys, and politicians who want everything their way. Some of the society's more famous (or infamous) names include Robert Bork, Ken Starr,

Antonin Scalia, John Bolton, Samuel Alito, Irving Kristol, William Kristol, John Negroponte, Michael Chertoff, John Ashcroft, Clarence Thomas (oops, where'd the Black guy come from?).

Look at all we've lost since having the power of our votes being counted dismissed by the late, ungreat William Rehnquist:

Nearly 3,000 dead on 9/11 who may not have perished had someone in the White House paid attention or cared; schools going down the tubes; loss of 1st Amendment Rights, especially when it applies to criticizing the Bush regime; no citizen is allowed to hear the faux-president or Dark Lord Cheney speechify in person without signing his or her soul to the devil; money flying out of our pockets and straight into the coffers of the big oil companies in the form of exorbitant profits; all the president's friends, cronies and contributors getting fat; tax dollars being funneled directed from the IRS to Halliburton and its subsidiaries, as well as the other no-bid contractors; New Orleans.

I caught part of the Senate Intelligence Committee hearings on C-Span today. Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-WV), Vice Chair, was giving National Intelligence Director Negroponte a dressing down, expressing his dismay at the complete lack of candor from either the intelligence community or the White House concerning King George XLIII's warrantless eavesdropping policy. He made some excellent points, including the fact that the excuse for informing Committee Chair Sen. Pat Roberts (R-Kan.), a Bush lapdog, yet not the rest of the members for lacking necessary clearances as lame and derelict.

Rockefeller ended his time by inquiring who were all these thousands of people this invasion of privacy has saved. Before going on to the next person Roberts, ever the Bushite and hawk, made a snide comment about all those who weren't killed on the Washington Bridge.

Where in the hell did that come from? What plot against the Washington Bridge?

Does this fool have any idea how much in the way of high-grade military explosives it would take to even make a dent in that bridge?

Then Negroponte, the career expert at taking what appears to be the truth then making it something completely different, began to speak. Interminably. And he said nothing. For well over an hour. Maybe two. I dunno, I lost track.

It was not Benjamin Franklin, but a contemporary of his, Richard Jackson, who most likely wrote, “Those who would give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety.” Despite the author, the fact remains that he's Bush #43, not King George XLIII, and has no business listening in on our telephone calls or reading our e-mails.

On the flip side, the president is a pub-

lic servant and answerable to both Houses, the Courts, and the People. So where are ALL the photos, documents and e-mails the White House has been asked to produce the past five years?

And Dark Lord the Dick Cheney has even less excuse not to come across with documents as requested.

We are the richest, most powerful country in the World. We have the potential to lead on many fronts. But part of the reason we can't is, as former President Jimmy Carter and John “Saint Jack” Danforth (Episcopal priest; former Ambassador and Senator-MO) there are too many evangelicals mucking up the Government because they can't distinguish where their version(s) of the Bible ends and where the law of man begins.

And it has become painfully obvious, far too many of these quasi-evangelicals are as corrupt as there are interpretations of the Book.

While reading Roosevelt's inauguration speech I was impressed by the sheer wisdom of the man. Bill Clinton attempted to display wisdom from time to time, but was forced by the need to reach the lowest common denominator to utilize the KISS method — keep it simple, stupid. Prior to Bill, Jimmy Carter occasionally touched upon brilliance and wisdom; John Kennedy was a wise man and it often shone through in his speeches.

There hasn't been anything even remotely close to that which might resemble wisdom emanating from anyone who works in the West Wing, including the highly educated Condi Rice, since January 20, 2001.

As a reminder to the Republicans and their continual talk of war, that Democrats are wusses who won't protect America, here's what the man who was forced to take on the Japanese and the Germans at the same time (as well as Grandpa Bush, indicted by FDR's Justice Department for consorting with and profiteering from the Nazis) said:

“*In the field of world policy I would dedicate this Nation to the policy of the good neighbor — the neighbor who resolutely respects himself and, because he does so, respects the rights of others — the neighbor who respects his obligations and respects the sanctity of his agreements in and with a world of neighbors.*”

DAY 1,886 OF AMERICA HELD HOSTAGE — our White House and the Executive Branch overrun by the Karl Rove-controlled Neo-con Fascist Regime.

Impeach George W. Bush and Dick Cheney.

(Jerry Tenuto is an erstwhile Philosopher and sometime Educator. A veteran with seven years of service in the U.S. Army, he holds a BS and MA in Communications from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. Depending upon your taste in political stew, you can either blame or thank Jerry for his weekly “Out Of The Blue” feature in THE LONE STAR ICONOCLAST. Visit his blog BLUE STATE VIEW at illinoiscentral.blogspot.com)

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Here is a wonderful opportunity for all you ICONOCLAST fans out there in Internet land and beyond. You won't want to miss it. For all of you grateful souls who thanked us profusely for being there for you last summer, keeping you up to the minute on happenings in Crawford—for those of you who enjoy reading this newspaper each week—here is your chance to support us.

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We haven't done much in the way of promotion yet, but we'd obviously like to see a lot of sales. It's a great volume, a wonderful souvenir for any of you who actually traveled to Crawford, camped at Camp Casey, or

Rustic Ramblings

By Gene Ellis



Gene Ellis, Ed.D. is a Bosque County resident who returned to the family farm after years of living in New Orleans, New York and Florida. She is an artist who holds a doctoral degree from New York University and is writing a book about the minor catastrophes of life.

just followed the news day by day from wherever you live in the world. It tells the story of, perhaps the beginning of the end of the War in Iraq, the tale of Cindy Sheehan's *Vigil* in Texas during the summer of 2005.

If you want to see us profit from the book (comprised mainly of the Internet postings we did for YOU, our readers), you can make that happen. We could really use the money. How much more honest can I get?

Leon wouldn't ask you. But I will. So buy, buy, buy! Please.

The Real 'Poop' On Toll Roads

Too many elected officials, along with many others, have bought into what TxDOT has told them—among other things—that roads can be built more quickly if they are toll roads, that there isn't enough money to build and maintain roadways, that toll roads will decrease traffic and pollution, etc., etc. CAMPO, cities and legislators were told that if they did not approve the Central Texas Toll Plan, the deadline would be reached that would divert available financing to other areas that approve the plan. These are all bogus statements because there is no study that proves them. This is an ignorant mentality that is shared by too many people.

Here's the real "poop" on toll roads. The bottom-line is that you can believe what you want to and so can our elected officials. There is no doubt that many special interest individuals and groups will benefit financially from toll roads, from the governor on down the line. There are many who have conflicts of interest and should NOT be permitted to hold offices that currently they are in and/or have held. Furthermore, foreign companies (e.g., CINTRA) will snatch up to 40-percent of toll road revenues each year for the next 70 to 90 years. *Exactly how does THAT benefit Texas families? How does THAT use taxpayer and toll tax dollars in the maximum benefit for the community at-large?*

In response to many people's question: If there have been illegal activities by pro-toll advocates then why haven't there been lawsuits? Honestly, that question is immaterial to the situation. How many people in political offices do illegal things but do not pay for their actions? Proving things in court takes years; in fact, just getting a case to court takes years. People in high places generally are above the law.

The fact that our own legislature has been able to circumvent the decision-making on school financing for the past decade should show you that our system is almost totally corrupt. Texas homeowners have been paying illegal state property taxes for years. Furthermore, with issues like voting machine integrity and voter fraud emerging more



Commentary

By Peter Stern

every day, do you really want to go with the pro-toll opinion that toll roads are the ONLY way to go WITHOUT REAL PROOF that toll roads are the only or best way to finance the building and maintenance of Texas roadways? Do you want generations of Texas children and their families to pay an infinite toll tax?

While pro-toll enthusiasts and others state that Texans will have a choice to drive on toll roads or not, that's just another bogus statement. Texas families will pay toll taxes whether or NOT they drive on toll roads. They'll pay toll taxes on goods and services they are charged for when businesses divert their own toll taxes/expenses onto their consumers. No one addresses this issue. An average Texas consumer WHO DOES NOT DRIVE ON TOLL ROADS will pay an estimated yearly toll tax at the register totaling thousands of dollars!!! Furthermore, gas taxes are supposed to pay for roadways and legislators prompted by the governor have frozen those taxes with no cost of living adjustments and they also have diverted some of the gas tax to other interests; implementing toll taxes will ensure a double tax on Texas roadways.

So, believe what you want to. It's a no-brainer. Toll taxation is a special interest power-play that honest hard-working families don't need!

Peter Stern of Driftwood, TX is a political writer well-known and published frequently throughout the Texas community and nationwide. He is a Vietnam-era Disabled Veteran and holds three post-graduate degrees. While a lifetime member of the Republican Party, he does NOT support the party's current platforms, philosophies and actions. You may contact Peter Stern at: <pstern@austin.rr.com>.

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Like Speed Skating, Our Olympic Preview Continues Because We Can't Stop

Hello and welcome to another exciting installment of our exclusive Winter Olympics preview:

Fifteen Reasons to Be a Summer Olympian.

It's a preview so exclusive even the Olympic Committee doesn't know about it. And, quite frankly, we'd like to keep it that way. That's because while the larger media outlets routinely get bogged down with boring interviews and analysis of things like the effect of wind trajectory on Bob Costas' hair, we are able to avoid all that. How? By going nowhere near the actual Olympic games. This allows us to provide you with valuable information that news sources in Torino are missing because they're too busy trying to keep their cannellonis from freezing.

Last week, we began our special preview with an in-depth look at the Slalom,



By
**Ned
Hickson**
Siuslaw News

Bobsleigh and Biathlon events. For those who missed it, here's a quick re-cap: Athletes who compete in the Slalom and Bobsleigh are insane, and though Biathlon sounds exciting, we challenge you to watch it without drooling on your arm.

OK, now that we're all caught up, we can begin this week's installment of our Olympic coverage by taking a look at

Knitting, Purling, and Scratching

Knitting was once an activity that grandmothers did when they got together and complained about how infrequently their grandkids called them. In recent years, there's been an explosion in knitting popularity. Now, it's not uncommon for granddaughters to feel they're too busy knitting to call their grandmothers. Younger women have taken up the craft, and so have high school and college students. But one group that's knitting and purling away the evening hours is somewhat of a surprise: adult men.

What's your stereotypical view of what it's like when a bunch of men get together? Are they watching sports? Are they talking about sex? Are they eating hot dogs and drinking beer? Are they scratching themselves? Are they burping and not saying, "Excuse me?" Well, if you add to that image a bunch of guys knitting potholders, you'll get what's going on today.

Once a week, a knitting shop in New York's Greenwich Village has a Men's Only night. There, the guys can exchange knitting tips – while they eat hot dogs and drink beer. Similar places are springing up all over the country and throughout the world. So, women are going to have to get used to hearing things like, "I might be home late. I'm going out knitting with the guys."

Foolish people will probably debate whether knitting is a "manly" activity. Even those traditionalists would have to admit that snowboarding isn't wimpy. Well, snowboarders are among the males who have recently started to knit. They want to make their own winter gear, both as a way of saving money and as a fashion statement.

Men probably knit for the same reasons that women do: some find it relaxing, some want to express themselves creatively, some want to make their own clothes, and some want to be able to say, "I can't answer that phone. My hands are full."

When I was a little kid who couldn't sit still, my grandmother taught me how to knit. She figured that if I'd sit there knitting, she wouldn't have to chase me all around her apartment. It worked. She never bothered showing me how to end a project or do anything fancier than knit, knit, knit, but that was enough for me. I'd end up with these long pieces that I'm sure she either threw away or ripped apart right when I went home to my parents, but she'd end up with a head that didn't ache.

Most historians believe that knitting



Modern Times
By
**Lloyd
Garver**

began with men. It grew out of knitting fishing nets. After that, came socks, and then sweaters that cost more than what those fishing boats used to cost.

In this day and age, when people can do things previously only done by the opposite gender, it's only natural that men have taken up needles and yarn. And these men don't necessarily fall into any stereotype. One wife reports that her husband who loves to knit also fishes and hunts. He's probably fun to shop with before vacations: "I'll take that shotgun, that reel, and that really cool pattern book to go with this yarn."

The web site, MenKnit.net has a motto, "Man Enough To Knit, Strong Enough to Purl." Probably some super macho knitters will carry this one step further and have the slogan tattooed on their hairy chests. I just hope they use something safer than a knitting needle to do the tattooing.

I can see a time when inmates in maximum-security prisons will give up weight lifting and scowling for crocheting and knitting. CAVEAT TO WARDENS AND GUARDS: Make sure they aren't knitting extra long scarves to swing themselves over the walls.

So, just as I see as positive the opening up of occupations and sports to women that were historically dominated by men, I see no reason why men should not be allowed to work with needles and balls of yarn just as women have done for years. In fact, not all knitting sessions have to be for just one sex. Men have been known to take women to a knitting class on a first date. This, of course, brings up a new social etiquette question, "Do you kiss after the first knit, or wait until after he takes you purling?"

Lloyd Garver has written for many television shows, ranging from "Sesame Street" to "Family Ties" to "Frasier" to "Home Improvement." He has also read many books, some of them in hardcover. He writes the "Modern Times" column for CBSnews.com's Opinion page and a weekly column for SportsLine.com. He can be reached at lloydgarver@yahoo.com

Cross Country Skiing — which is even less exciting than the Biathlon since there's no shooting involved. (At least in the Biathlon you are occasionally awakened by gunfire.) In cross country skiing the only sound is the commentator, who is trying to keep himself awake by finding exciting words to describe what appears to be several people looking for the nearest ski lift.

Which isn't to say there isn't plenty of excitement at the Winter Olympics. In fact, when it comes to Curling, the longer you watch four people moving a large stone across the ice using nothing but brooms, the more exciting cross country skiing gets. For those of you who are unfamiliar with the sport of Curling, this competition became an official Olympic event four years ago as a replacement for Ice Bowling, which [Pause here for dramatic effect] fell through at the last minute.

In Curling, each team consists of four players: the *Lead*, who delivers the stone; the *Second* and *Third*, who sweep the ice; and the *Skip*, who calls out important strategy like "Sweep faster!" and "Do you think anyone's still watching?!" This continues until one team is able to place its stone closest to the center of a special target marked on the ice. Or until Bud Light pulls its corporate sponsorship.

Next we have Figure Skating, which gets its name from the Ukrainian phrase *Ukrlegnz Kgronzmof Itzentofl*, meaning "Cold ankle twist." Figure skating combines music with complex skating routines that include a series of required elements, such as the "salchow," "double axle," and the dreaded "triple latte."

This brings us to Freestyle Skiing, in which skiers perform jumps, flips and other thrilling acrobatic maneuvers, just like I do, except that they don't land on their heads. Continuing along that theme, we will end today's installment of our three-part Winter Olympic preview with the Nordic Combined, which, as you might expect, combines skiing and large hairy men in horned helmets.

That's what you'd expect, but you would be wrong. It actually combines the acrobatics of freestyle skiing (jumping and high speeds) with the stamina of cross country skiing (yawn), effectively re-creating how Nordic men returned home from pubs some 200 years ago.

Next week we will wrap up our special preview with a look at Luge, Skeleton and other Olympic events whose athletes are routinely denied medical coverage.

(You can write to Ned Hickson at P.O. Box 10, Florence, OR 97439, or visit his website at www.nedhickson.net.)

Hoodwinked



The events surrounding the notorious trip to Grandma's house find Little Red Riding Hood, Grandma and several others as the focus of a criminal investigation. Charges include a domestic disturbance, breaking and entering, and intent to eat, among others.

PG

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State of Reality

Will somebody pinch me, please? I think I've died and gone to dystopia. As I write this one day after this year's State of the Union speech, I find myself having a difficult time wrapping my mind around the full gravity of what just happened.

Around 8:15 p.m., Cindy Sheehan was walking into the House Gallery and taking a seat. She was attending the State of the Union speech as the guest of Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey of California. She had been identified at security checkpoints and allowed to enter. She was not trying to disturb the event.

At 8:30 p.m., Sheehan unzipped her jacket, revealing her t-shirt. The very guard who helped her to her seat spotted the shirt and yelled, "Protestor!" The clothing in question read "2,245 Dead. How many more?" She was not asked to cover her shirt or zip up her jacket. Nobody said a word. An officer named Mike Weight grabbed Sheehan by the wrists and literally dragged her out of the room and up a flight of stairs. He gave little merit to the fact that he had physically hurt her in the process.

"Well, you were protesting!" he asserted, as though it were some sort of justification. "I did not wear it to be disruptive," she contended. In reality, if she really wanted to ruffle the president's feathers, she would have unzipped the jacket during the speech, with the eyes of the media upon her. She did not.

As our entire House of Representatives, Senate and Supreme Court watched, the mother of a boy killed in Iraq was hauled out of their hall of power, shamed and wondering what crime she had committed. For once, she was not participating in any knowing contravention of the law. She came to observe the president's speech as a guest of a Democratic Congresswoman; not to use it as another stop in her campaign of civil disobedience.

Just moments before his most important speech this year, Bush's political opponent was arrested and charged with "unlawful conduct," a misdemeanor that carries a penalty of one year. Her crime was wearing a t-shirt and sitting quietly in a room as a guest of a member of our federal government. Not a single member of Congress or the court said a word. They just sat and watched this grieving mother being treated as a criminal for the offense of wearing a shirt with a message that the president does not wish to acknowledge.

The makeup of the Supreme Court had been altered six hours earlier with the narrow approval of Samuel Alito. A man who argued that it is within the law for a police officer to use lethal force against a fleeing, unarmed suspect makes it past the most corrupt Congress in our history, and the administration's first move is to arrest a political opponent for exercising a right guaranteed by the Constitution? A man who argued that it is okay to strip search an adolescent girl because her father is a drug dealer gets approved to the highest court in the land, and our government's first action is to brazenly circumvent the First Amendment in his presence as he smiles and applauds?

In 1971, the former Supreme Court ruled that a man who was arrested for wearing a shirt that read "F*** the Draft" was within his rights. The case was *Cohen vs. The State of California*, and Mr. Cohen won. How short a time after the court's makeup changed that our government once again encroached upon the rights of its citizens.

Pardon me for saying so, but that arrest sets the tone for the remainder of



The Webster Retort

By
Stephen
Webster

this year much more loudly than the thunderous applause offered upon Bush's entry. Let us hope it does not serve as precedent for what is left of this man's time in the White House, be it one more year or neigh-three.

I am utterly disgusted and honestly a little afraid. No government likes criticism, least of all the Bush administration. They go to great lengths to choke off dissent by implementing enormous security perimeters at "events of special national significance" that, if breached by protestors, allow for felony charges and the use of violence against peaceful dissenters. They erect "free speech zones" with chain-link fence and barbed wire, often miles away from the people's antagonist. And they shout down those who would stand up for their values, branding them to be "Terrorist Sympathizers" and "America Haters." Now the full assault has begun with a renewed campaign of shock and awe.

Am I an "America Hater" if I wear a button that reads, "Support the Troops: Bring them home"? Am I in league with Osama bin Laden if I refuse to surrender my rights for a false sense of security? The answer is simply NO! I am mad as hell, and I am not going to take it any more! How can we continue to justify this theft in the name of security?

During the speech, the Republican-nominated members of the court stood and applauded Bush at all those key moments. Their newly outnumbered associates abstained from such open partisanship. The arrest of Cindy Sheehan just before the president's address is nothing short of a statement of intent, guarded by this man's powers as the new retainer of the judiciary. Any member of our society who values their inherent rights as an American should be concerned.

What is the State of our Union? One party now controls the House, Senate, Executive and Judiciary. That party's leader has admitted to ordering the state to spy on its citizens, claiming that the laws which prohibit such actions are simply too old to follow. I openly wonder what other laws he considers to be outdated. To him, FISA is irrelevant. So too must be Posse Comitatus, the barrier which prohibits use of the military to enforce his will in our streets. What about the Civil Rights Act? Or presidential term limits? The will of this man and his party penetrates and dominates every sector of our government without check or balance, yet so many of us continue doing nothing.

It is time to stand up again, America. As we did when Johnson and Nixon encroached upon our freedoms, so too must we stand and protect our birthright against this new foe who pretends to be our protector. To let such transgressions pass without our peaceful resistance is a sin tantamount to those of this tyrant.

Stephen Webster is an Investigative Reporter and Syndicated Columnist with *THE NEWS CONNECTION*, a Staff Columnist with *George W. Bush's hometown weekly THE LONE STAR ICONOCLAST*, and a former Contributor to *The Dallas Morning News Science & Technology* section. For more of Webster's musings, visit <Gonz0Muckraker.BlogSpot.com>.

From Earwax To Air Travel, A Little Something For Everyone

BY JEFF CARMACK
SPECIAL TO THE ICONOCLAST

For all of you who follow the latest in earwax research, the big news comes from Japan, where researchers with nothing better to do have identified the gene that controls what type of earwax a person has.

Earwax fans (you know who you are) already know that the stuff comes in two varieties — no, not skim and two percent, but rather wet and dry. The wet stuff predominates in Africa and Europe, the dry form rules among East Asian, and South and Central Asia are roughly half and half. The rest of the world just wonders who the hell spends their time thinking about earwax.

By comparing DNA, researchers identified the gene that controls which type a person has. The gene that affects earwax is known to geneticists as the ATP-binding cassette C11 gene; it's known to non-scientists as "gross."

Also on the science front, there's good news and bad news. The bad news is that researchers have determined that Teflon is a carcinogen. The good news is that the tumors wash off easily with soap and warm water.

Happier news comes from New York, where a new company is trying to ease the nightmare of flying while seated next to a crashing bore — or, even worse, Geraldo Rivera — by helping like-minded flyers become seatmates.

Peter Shankman started AirTroductions after he spent a pleasant flight seated next to Miss Texas. His new company will give travelers a

GUEST COMMENTARY

shot at a similar experience by letting them choose whom they sit next to. In other words, it's like grade school but without the booger jokes.

To use AirTroductions, travelers register online and list personal details in a profile. When they post their traveling itineraries, the registry provides information on other people taking the same flights.

For instance, if you like barbecue, then you might enjoy sitting with someone from Lockhart. Conversely, if you're a Seahawks guy, then you might want to avoid sitting next to a Steelers fan. And if your name is Ahmad and your hobbies include flying, then you better plan on taking the bus.

One early AirTroductions subscriber said she signed up because she gets nervous when she flies, but "If I'm sitting next to somebody and I'm talking to them, I don't even know if we're taking off or landing," she said. A couple of rum and Cokes will do the same thing for about the same price, plus you don't have to talk to anyone but the flight attendant with the booze.

Actually, alcohol contributed to this lady's worst flying experience — being seated next to a woman who was falling-down drunk first thing in the morning. But that's what she gets for sitting next to Jenna Bush.

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Varied Expressions Of Nationalism

By DANIEL J. SMIECHOWSKI
SPECIAL TO THE ICONOCLAST

Mexico's leftist candidate for President vows to help the poor and elderly, to clean up corruption, and to not be a puppet of George W. Bush.

Newly elected Presidents of Bolivia, Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Brazil, Venezuela, Spain, and Norway elect likewise.

All these countries have participated in free and open democratic elections.

The Palestinian territories have within the last few days elected an avowed terrorist organization to lead their people, all through the democratic process.

Meanwhile, the world's largest Communist state, China, finds its standard of living rising faster than an Atlas Rocket due in large measure to cheap Chinese exports touted by the Bush Administration as benefiting the American consumer.

Despite their loss, liberals still hold a fighting position in Canada's Parliament as well as in Germany.

Why this tilt toward the state and away from the individual. It has to do with the pit bull on the block or what is perceived as America's King Tut Syndrome.

Teddy Roosevelt may have been right by living up to the moniker of "the 20th century belonging to America."

President Roosevelt was consumed by an expansionist view of world affairs. But a century later, the rhetoric inside the beltway with respect to world opinion is akin to a "tail bites dog" philosophy.

The George W. Bush Doctrine of personal empowerment, preemptive strike, and free market excess overlooks the moral and ethical implications upon both the state and world itself.

Additionally, while America touts the evil doers of Sept. 11 as enemies of freedom, the rest of the planet asks a very wise question. That is, why would anyone commit such a horrendous crime?

Expressions of nationalism are to be expected when a nation's security is under siege.

The American Experience in Iraq is much similar to The Vichy Regime in France during 1940-44.

That is, the United States much like the German occupation of France dur-

GUEST COMMENTARY



Smiechowski

ing the Second World War is considered an unwelcome force.

Wise men understand however, the need to cultivate one's own garden.

Our Federal government's response to the horrors and ravages of Hurricane Katrina was a call to arms by leftist candidates throughout the world. We are in essence, the poster child for everything the world seeks to abolish includ-

ing corporate and government corruption, lack of affordable healthcare, raping of the environment, cultural insensitivity, and decreasing civil liberties.

The recent election of so-called socialist leaders throughout the world is ironically a backlash to a foreign policy meant to protect and preserve our Republic.

Furthermore, countries such as Spain, Poland, and Italy are now gradually withdrawing their troops from Iraq. These countries were prostituted by America's foreign policy blunders and now see our government for its true colors, and it is not pretty, folks.

If charity begins at home, then let us protect America from within by reason, lessons from the past, a collaboration of ideas presented by the world body politic together with America's wisemen.

It was not long ago that our great beloved nation aspired and attained greatness throughout the world.

The horrifying events of 9-11 have propelled these great United States into a moral, ethical, and legal free-fall that can only be reconciled at the ballot box.

See you in November.

Daniel J. Smiechowski is a columnist for the Hillcrest News in San Diego, Calif. He is a former public school teacher with a diverse academic background in Sociology, Politics, French, Linguistics and Education. He has traveled abroad 18 times including study at the University of Paris, France, "La Sorbonne." Smiechowski writes primarily on social philosophy and psychology and resides in San Diego. <SmiechowskiD@aol.com>

Whites Just Wanna Have Fun

Hello, I'm Nathan Diebenow, and I'm white.

I know it's hard to believe that I'm both, but it's true.

I show symptoms.

I left after 15 minutes into watching the Oscar-nominated film *Crash* because I couldn't believe anybody would behave in such blatantly racist ways.

I mean, when I talk about race in the company of minorities, I want to feel safe and in control so that nobody will kick my butt if I say something wrong.

Yeah, so, adding it all up, I probably couldn't last being black for more than five seconds.

But then again, why would I?

There are so many sweet benefits to being white!

I can get away with almost anything. I'm practically a ghost.

Whenever a crazy white boy bombs a federal office building in Oklahoma, eats a couple of college girls in Florida, or shoots up his high school classmates in Colorado, the police don't round up a bunch of six-foot-tall, blonde, blue-eyed white males aged 18-35 for interrogation.

No, the rest of the white population is left alone, and that one crazy white boy is singled out as a "bad apple."

I guess if that's the case, then Enron must have been a "nuclear apple" since it destroyed the lives of its 20,000 employees, huh?

The same simply can't be said for blacks in the United States, since they're twice as likely as whites to have their cars stopped and searched for drugs. Whites, though, are twice as likely to possess drugs when searched, according to the Department of Justice.

If blacks and other minorities have it bad here, then so do our colored neighbors across the borders and overseas.

It's funny how it's "terrorism" when 19 Arab guys crash an airplane into two of our buildings, but it's not terrorism when we use "Shock and Awe" against Afghanistan and Iraq.

I thought if someone commits a crime, then we'd try him as a criminal, not blow up his entire country. I mean, the United States wouldn't bomb Ireland if the Irish Republican Army bombed a pub in Boston, Mass., right?

"Mommy! Mommy! Billy hit me and stole my lunch money!"

"Okay, Tommy, okay. Let me get my bazooka, and we'll go level his house."

The problem with us white people is that we're privileged. We're holier than thou, and if you say otherwise, you're suspect, ridiculed, and punished sooner than later.

Third World prison state languishing in the New World Order economic death camp of has-been nations.

Thank You,

Ed Ventresca, Canyon Country, Calif.
To The Editor:

What is happening in America? We have a President who is now so fragile that he has to be protected — from the wording on a T-shirt.

Since when is free speech conditional on whether you agree with the President?

The First Amendment exists to protect dissenting statements.

The President's speech last night suggested - once again - that the 9/11 terrorists came from Iraq. Everyone knows this is not true. This deception will not erase the immorality of sending young Americans to die in an unnecessary war —

The Rubber Cement Index

By Nathan Diebenow



In Lutheran terms, white people practice a "theology of glory," which means instead of behaving as if God is God, we act as if *we* are God, and when we think we're God, we do some pretty stupid things to ourselves and others.

To parents and teachers, children that misbehave "act out," but to American Indians, white people that distribute small pox with blankets "exterminate."

Just to be fair — since we must be fair if we are to build a fair world — whites dominate and exploit other whites, too, but this is no excuse for perpetuating our system of inequality.

"I'm not racist. I'm not sexist. I hate everybody equally." just won't cut it, people.

Neither will this disparity between our optimism of the "American Dream" and our cynicism toward changing our governmental policies!

Racism will end when whites humble themselves to minorities, and the only way the government can change is when its citizens bother to show up to take responsibility.

Anything less sacrifices heaven for hell.

INFO

Tim Wise

www.timwise.org

Whitaker Makes Dean's Honor Roll

COLLEGE STATION — Texas A&M University has named its honor students for the 2005 fall semester, recognizing students for outstanding academic performance. Crawford resident Farrah Dawn Whitaker is among those honored.

The Dean's Honor Roll recognizes students taking at least 15 semester hours or first semester students taking least 12 semester hours who have maintained at least a 3.75 grade point ratio (GPR) out of a possible 4.0 during the most recent grading period.

Whitaker, a senior, is working toward a Bachelor of Business Administration, Finance.

against a nation that posed no threat to our security.

It is time for the U.S. government to stop manufacturing terrorists in the Middle East. It is also time — for the U.S. government to stop its assaults on liberty here at home.

Mike Ford, Austin

To The Editor:

An open letter to: President George W. Bush, The White House.

Re: Iraq Solution Revealed.

Mr. President,

Please command the United States Military in Iraq to stand down for Lent in honor of this ancient holy season for Christianity. This will allow us the opportunity to observe if the Sunni insurgents, Mr. Bin Laden, Muqtada al-Sadr, and the Iraqi people and their elected govern

Continued On Next Page



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To The Editor:

"Traitors in U.S. government transfer power to U.N."

Since 1994, traitors inside the U.S. government both elected and appointed have conned America into deceptively misnamed "free trade agreements."

Congress is transferring America's freedom and powers over to the World Trade Organization (WTO), which will ultimately be controlled by the corrupt United Nations.

It is time for true American patriots,

every man and woman of good human conscience, to get information at <www.stoptheftaa.org> or 1-800-jbs-usa-1 and CONTACT CONGRESS toll free at 1-877-762-8762 NOW, and DEMAND that Congress extract the U.S. from the United Nations, WTO (World Trade Organization), NAFTA, CAFTA and all "Free Trade" scams such as the FTAA, etc., and further visit: <www.getusout.org> and sign the petition to kick the United Nations out of our country before we become just one more

Cousin Champions Stephen F. Austin's Cause

Mary Austin Holley landed at Galveston on Feb. 5, 1843, on her fifth and final visit to her dead cousin's former colony.

When Stephen F. Austin was 11 years old, his father Moses sent him back east to stay with relatives the boy barely knew. From 1804 until 1807, the future "Father of Texas" studied at an academy in New Haven, Conn., and got acquainted with his kinfolks.

One of many cousins was Mary Austin Holley, daughter of Moses' brother. At that point in their lives, Stephen and Mary had very little in common. She was five or nine years older — historians cannot agree on her birthday — and already married to a man of the cloth who would be her husband for the next two decades.

When the time came for higher education, Stephen passed up prestigious Yale for Transylvania University in Lexington, Ky. Mary must have thought her cousin a fool for turning his back on the hometown college she would have given her eyeteeth to attend. She had the brains but the wrong gender for Yale, which did not admit women until 1969.

After nine happy years in Boston, where Mary would have gladly spent the rest of her life, husband Horace was elected president of cousin Stephen's alma mater. Mary reluctantly moved to Kentucky, but religious differences with the trustees of the university ultimately culminated in Horace's resignation.

On a ship voyage from New Orleans to New York in 1827, husband and wife both came down with yellow fever. Mary survived the scourge, but Horace succumbed and his body was dumped overboard, euphemistically known as burial at sea.

A middle-aged widow with a young son to support, Mary went back to Louisiana to look for work. She found it as a governess on a plantation not far from New Orleans.

For several years, Mary had closely followed the progress of Stephen F. Austin as he seemed almost singlehandedly to open Mexican Texas to Anglo-American settlement. A prolific letter-writer, she corresponded regularly with her

cousin and her brother Henry, also a resident of Texas, both of whom urged her to see the "promised land" for herself.

In October 1831, Mary did just that, sailing from New Orleans to the mouth of the Brazos River and then upstream to Brazoria. A second ship brought Henry's wife and six children, ranging in age from four to 16, 10 days later. It was a tight fit in the log cabin, but Mary did not mind so long as the person she most wanted to see did not disappoint her.

Stephen kept his promise even though he had to crawl out of a sickbed and ride 60 miles on horseback through a blue norther. The rare family reunion was reason enough, but Mary's desire to write a book about Texas made the difficult trip mandatory.

The normally close-mouthed empressario found it surprisingly easy to talk to his cousin. Long into the night, Stephen poured out his heart to Mary telling her things no one had ever heard before nor ever would again.

The accomplished author turned their rambling conversations into coherent prose. In 10 days she had the manuscript for "Texas: Observations, Historical, Geographical, and Descriptive, in a Series of Letters Written during a Visit to Austin's Colony, with a View to a Permanent Settlement in That Country in the Autumn of 1831."

The title was a mouthful, but the book, published in 1833, was just what Austin needed. Mary's glowing description of his frontier paradise was directly responsible for the immigration of hundreds if not thousands of Americans and Europeans to Texas.

But, according to Mary's biographers, something else also happened at Henry Austin's place in 1831. Two lonely people overcame the daunting difference in their ages and the uncomfortably close proximity of their branches on the same family tree and fell in love. "They determined," claimed one chronicler, "that they would marry when Austin had settled affairs between his Texas colony and Mexico."

But that was not what fate had in store for the alleged lovebirds.

This Week In Texas History



By Bartee Haile

A family crisis delayed Mary's return trip for three and a half years. Following the sudden death of her sister-in-law, brother Henry begged her to take three of his children. She could not say no and generously made a home for them in Lexington.

The star-crossed cousins met for the last time on March 12, 1836, six days after the fall of the Alamo. Stephen stopped for two days in Lexington on his five-month canvass of the United States for money and volunteers for the Texas Revolution.

When not drumming up support for the

heroic struggle, Mary put the finishing touches on "Texas," the first English-language history of the soon-to-be sovereign land. Published in November 1836, it sold like hot cakes.

Stephen never got a chance to read the best-seller. Exhausted by his travels and a lingering bout with malaria, he caught pneumonia and died on Dec. 27, 1936. Her romantic biographer observed sadly, "Once again Mary lost the man she loved."

Mary Austin Holley visited Texas on three more occasions but never made the Lone Star Republic her permanent home. She was living in New Orleans and working on a biography of cousin Stephen, when yellow fever ended her life in August 1846.

"Outlaws & Lawmen" - "Best of This Week in Texas History" Vol. VI now available for \$10.95 plus \$3.25 postage and handling from Bartee Haile, 1912 Meadow Creek Dr., Pearland, TX 77581.

Two Crawford Students On Honor Roll

WACO — Crawford residents Whitney Mitchell and Justin Smith have earned a place on the Dean's Honor Roll for the Fall semester at Texas State Technical College Waco.

Mitchell is a student in Advertising Design & Print Technology. Smith is a student in Mechanical Engineering Technology, and both are among those recognized with a scholastic achievement of a 3.5 to 3.9 grade point average.

District 17 Counties Eligible for U.S. Small Business Administration Disaster Assistance

WASHINGTON — U.S. Representative Chet Edwards announced today that the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) will make available low interest disaster loans for small, non-farm businesses in Bosque, Hill, Limestone, McLennan, and Robertson counties in district 17. Edwards requested in January that these loans be made available after Texas was declared a natural disaster area due to damage caused by wildfires and drought.

Small businesses may qualify for Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDLs) of up to \$1.5 million to help meet financial obligations and operating expenses which could have been met had the disaster not occurred.

"Eligibility for these loans is based on financial impact of the disaster only and not on any actual property damage. These loans have an interest rate of 4%, a maximum term of 30 years, and are restricted to small businesses without the financial ability to offset the adverse impact without hardship," said Alfred E. Judd, Director of SBA's Field Operations Center-West.

Small business owners in Bosque and Hill counties suffering from drought con-

ditions since March 1, 2005 and those in Limestone, McLennan, and Robertson counties suffering from the conditions from Feb. 1, 2005 through Oct. 21, 2005 are eligible for EIDLs. Small business owners in Brazos, Grimes, Hood, Johnson, Madison, and Somervell counties suffering since April 1, 2005 may apply for EIDLs. The deadline to apply is Aug. 21.

For more information and application forms call 1-800-659-2955 or 1-800-877-8339 for the hearing impaired. Information is also available at SBA's website at <www.sba.gov/disaster>.

Residents with businesses primarily engaged in farming or ranching are ineligible for SBA disaster assistance but may apply for low interest loans from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) through their local Farm Services Agency (FSA).

"When a community is hit hard by natural disaster, the federal and state government should work together in lending a helping hand to those who need it and President Bush, Governor Perry, and all federal and local agencies involved deserve our thanks for acting quickly to respond to the needs of Texans," said Edwards.

Continued From Previous Page

ment representatives are sincere about peace.

I am suggesting that we call out Osama Bin Laden on his offer of peace. We have seen his skill as a warrior now let us challenge him to be peaceful. He speaks of peace. We speak of peace. Yet war is declared.

Our forty-six day stand down will allow us to see if the suicide and roadside bombings stop. We will see if the attacks on fellow Iraqis and coalition forces stop. We will see if the Iraqi people join together peacefully to rebuild their country.

When our fasting period has ended and if there is promise for continued peace, we will immediately bring twenty-five percent of our troops home on Easter Sunday and hand the Iraqi people a timetable for complete withdrawal. Then, we will invest the saved money into rebuild-

ing New Orleans so that the celebration of Mardi Gras is resurrected through the spirit of giving.

Finally, in advancing boldly toward peace we will bring nuclear disarmament to the table. If we truly learn to live together with our Arab neighbors in genuine peace and love without fear of attack by the end of 2012, we will destroy twenty-five percent of our nuclear arsenal, the equivalent percentage of the Earth's Islamic population. The World will bear witness that we are a virtuous nation.

Mr. President, with your faith and courage, the United States of America will give up war for Lent and become a beautiful example of what it means to be Christlike.

Obediently at your service,
Michael Anthony Carnacchi,
Sebastopol, Calif.

Tough Grandma Opens Door For Real Reform Says Independent Texans Leader

David Stall, Stop The Corridor Leader, First To Take The Pledge

AUSTIN — Linda Curtis of Independent Texans, an association of independent and split ticket voters, applauded independent gubernatorial candidate Comptroller Carole Keeton Strayhorn's announcement challenging all candidates in this election to support giving Texans the right to statewide Initiative and Referendum (I&R).

Curtis said, "Carole Keeton Strayhorn understands that what it really means to be tough is to give Texas voters the most important tool to fight partisan and corrupt special interest deals — I&R. So do the vast majority Texans who, regardless of party affiliation, support I&R by 70 percent according to Texas Poll."

Independent Texans has already begun to survey candidates across the state on their I&R position. The first candidate to take the I&R pledge is David Stall, <<http://stallforsenate.org>>, leader of the citizens movement to stop the contentious Trans Texas (NAFTA) Corridor. Stall is running in a hotly contested Republican primary in State Senate District 18, where Sen. David Armbrister (D-Victoria) is retiring. With Strayhorn no longer running in the primary, reformers and anti-Corridor forces (an unlikely coalition of farmers, ranchers and environmentalists) across the state are converging in this race.

Conservative estimates are that at least 4.2 million voters in Texas, a 35 percent plurality, identify as independent, according to the CNN/Gallup and other polls. Millions more who vote in either party primary split their ticket, voting for the person regardless of party. Citizens in 24 states have used I&R for the last century to enact such reforms as the 8

Strayhorn Supporting Initiative, Referendum



Carole Keeton Strayhorn, speaking at an event in Crawford a couple of years ago, discusses *The Iconoclast*, holding a copy above her head. — Iconoclast File Photo

hour work day, women's suffrage and social security. In the most recent decade voters have used I&R to win fundamen-

tal restructuring reforms such as term limits, redistricting reform, fair ballot access and campaign finance reform.

Added Curtis, "Independent voters are all over the place on single issues. What unites us with millions of party voters, is giving ordinary people political tools like

I&R to circumvent a special interest driven legislature. It's going to take One Tough Grandma, a genuine populist independent, to win the mother of all reforms — I&R."

INFO:

<<http://independenttexans.com>>

Economic Development Telecast On Global Gateways, Feb. 14

WACO — The Heart of Texas Council of Governments (HOTCOG) and Texas State Technical College will be hosting the Economic Development Administration's Telecast "Global Gateways, Tuesday, Feb. 14, from 2 to 3 p.m.

The Telecast will be held at the IDEAS Center which is located in the Electronics Building at the TSTC campus in Waco. The Telecast will discuss how to manage the links between transportation, critical infrastructure investments, and economic development in critical corridors of the global market. Interested persons should contact Erica Sullivan at 254-756-7822.

Persons with disabilities who plan to attend this meeting and who may need auxiliary aids or services are requested to call HOTCOG at 254-756-7822 five working days prior to the meeting so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

\$11.9 Billion Cut In Student Aid Harms America's Future

WASHINGTON, DC — U.S. Representative Chet Edwards, a member of the House Budget and Appropriations Committees, today strongly opposed passage of the Budget reconciliation bill, which cuts \$11.9 billion in funding to federal student loan programs. Specifically, the bill includes higher fees on students, higher interest rates on parent loans, elimination of mandatory spending to administer higher education programs, and cuts in lender subsidies.

"I salute President Bush for saying in his State of the Union speech that education is the key to American competitiveness. Unfortunately, this action by the House leadership moves the country backwards by cutting \$11.9 billion in student aid programs over the next five years, the largest student aid cut in our nation's history. It could not come at a worse time," said Edwards.

He continued, "Hard-working families are already facing fast rising costs for tuition, college textbooks, gasoline, and home utility bills. Last year the United States had the largest international trade deficit in history—over \$700 billion—and we are competing with China, Japan, India and other countries for good-paying jobs. Thus, the Congressional leadership's plan will hurt both working families and our nation's future economic competitiveness."

According to the nonprofit College Board, average tuition and fees at public universities have surged 40% over the last five years. The median family income has crept up just 16% over that period. Early this year, the U.S. Department of Education changed its eligibility formula for Pell Grants, an assistance program for low-income students. That eliminated aid to more than 80,000 students and reduced awards to about 1.5 million others.

"The \$11.9 billion student aid cuts won't reduce the deficit. Instead, they are being pushed so the Congressional leadership can pass a few weeks from now an extension of recent temporary dividend cuts that give a \$220,000 annual tax break to those making \$1 million a year in dividend income," said Edwards. "This bill flunks the test of fairness and vision, and I believe the House leadership is out of touch with the values and priorities of American families, Democrats, Republicans, and Independents alike."

THE VIGIL 26 DAYS IN CRAWFORD, TEXAS

REPORTED BY W. LEON SMITH FOREWORD BY CINDY SHEEHAN
& THE STAFF OF THE LONE STAR ICONOCLAST

AVAILABLE IN BOOKSTORES & ON THE WEB...

THE VIGIL

In August of 2005, a grieving mother and her supporters laid siege to Crawford, Texas. Cindy Sheehan set up camp outside of President Bush's ranch, determined to find some answers. For 26 days, all eyes were on Camp Casey.

At the center of it all was Crawford's own *Lone Star Iconoclast*. In the heart of the reddest of Red States, *The Iconoclast* found itself caught between the public's (deeply conservative) expectations, and the paper's publisher, W. Leon Smith's, sense of journalistic duty to report objectively. **THE VIGIL** is an invaluable record of *The Iconoclast's* coverage, with Sheehan herself providing a scene-setting foreword.

The result is a high stakes, blow-by-blow account of the events as they unfolded. You experience this vigil right along with the writers and participants: the heat, the fire ants, the gunplay, the celebrity appearances, and the intense emotional rollercoaster that has yet to end. Smith and his crew demonstrated a level of professional virtue that—to quote Sheehan herself—"shines like a lone spark of integrity in the prairie darkness."



disinformation! [ALL ADDRESS]